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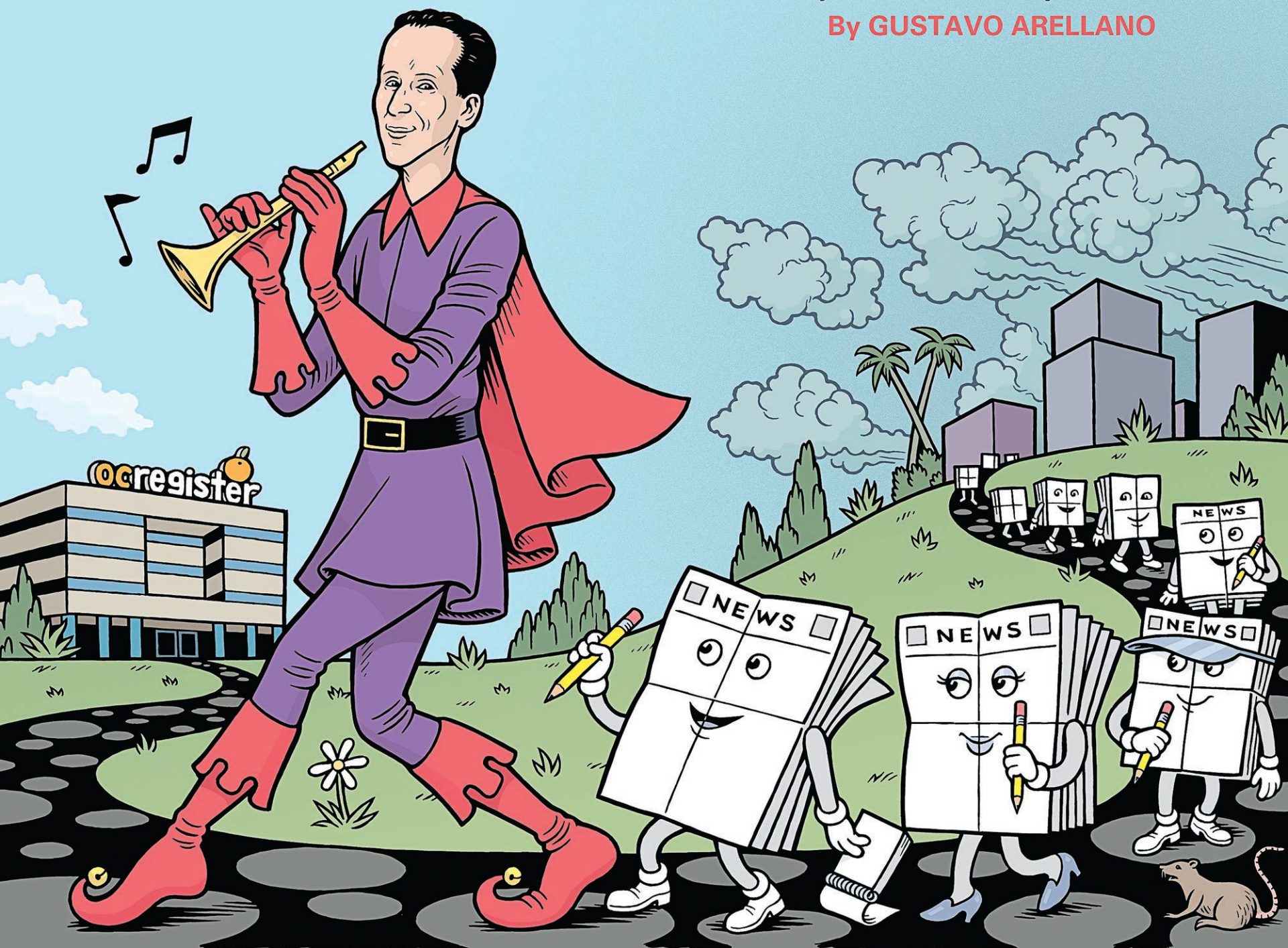
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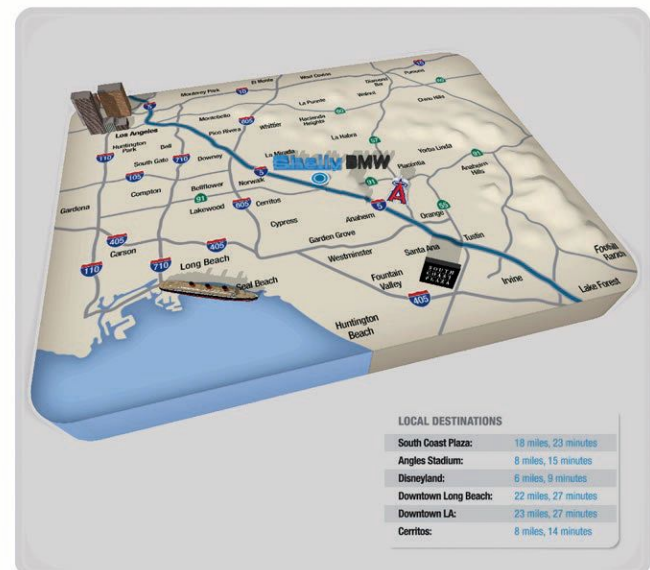
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Los Ovarios of Steel

The ballsy, brash, brilliant, too-short life of Mexican regional music queen and Long Beach girl Jenni Rivera

BY GUSTAVO ARELLANO

Back in 2003, I pitched my then-editor at the *Weekly* a profile about a woman for whom I didn't particularly care. Her name was Jenni Rivera, a Long Beach gal who was already a cult hit in Southern California for her unconventional, woman-power approach to Mexican regional music, but virtually unknown anywhere else. I really didn't care for her music—being a traditionalist, I found it improper a *mujer* would sing about getting drunk and flirting around and being proud of it, especially in a genre and culture in which females were expected to be classy *damas*.

But I also knew a great story when I saw one, so I went forward. Rivera's publicist gave me one hour to interview her; we talked on the phone for three while she was in a Maryland hotel room on her first East Coast tour. Over the course of that conversation, I dropped all my macho bullshit and became an eternal fan. It wasn't just the music, which was loud, brash and wonderfully unapologetic, but also what she represented: a visionary who, as I would write, "changed Mexican culture forever" simply by singing about her rags-to-riches story and urging fans to believe they *also* could find success if they only tried ("La Malandrina," Nov. 27, 2003).

We talked again in 2009, this time in person for a profile I was writing for *Latina*. We sat in the wood-paneled Woodland Hills offices of Fonovisa, the label at which she stayed for most of her career. By now, Rivera was a megastar, and her songwriting had become even better—but, as during our first interview, she told me music wasn't enough. She wanted to create a beauty line. Beauty salons. Businesses for her daughters. A clothing line. Make the crossover to television. Acting. Real estate. Start a charity. Get into political activism. And conquer the "mainstream" English-language market that refused to acknowledge her because her success was only with Mexicans.

What was most amazing about Rivera is that everything she told me she'd do in our two interviews, she accomplished—empty promises simply didn't exist in her life. And she was just about to introduce her zaftig personality to the rest of America. Last year, Long Beach Poly inducted Rivera into its alumni Hall of Fame. She was in talks with fellow Jackrabbit Snoop Dogg to collaborate on a track. Just last week, ABC announced a development deal for a sitcom that, as Deadline.com put it, would star "Rivera as a strong, middle-class, single Latina woman working to raise a family using unique parenting skills, while struggling to run a family business and navigate her extended, co-dependent relatives—all while fighting the cultural perception that she needs a man to do it."

In other words, the story of her magnificent, inspiring life, which was cut tragically short Dec. 9 when a plane carrying the 43-year-old Rivera and six others crashed south of Monterrey, Mexico. She left behind five chil-

dren, two grandchildren, her parents and siblings, and a grieving—but eternally thankful—fan base of millions.

RIVERA'S TALE IS A HORACE GREELY FABLE VIA A telenova. She was born in Culver City, still in her mother's womb as they crossed into the United States in 1969. The family eventually settled in a rough part of Long Beach. Rivera dropped out of Poly when she became pregnant at 15, but she finished at Reid Continuation High School, not only earning her GED, but also graduating as class valedictorian.

And then she met societal expectations: not just those that Americans had for single mothers, but also what Mexicans had for women. Rivera became a receptionist for Cintas Acuario, the legendary label founded by her father, Pedro, that launched the *narcocorrido* genre and featured her brothers as hitmakers. But she saw a huge opportunity: No artist in the Mexican music industry was telling the stories of *mexicanas* outside the traditional Madonna/whore prism.

"I became a singer because I'm a businesswoman," she said in her 2003 *Weekly* interview. "I was a business child, then a business teenager, and finally a businesswoman. No other woman was doing it, so I knew I'd dominate the market."

"At the same time, I didn't just want to be another

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



RIVERA IN 2003, READY TO CONQUER THE WORLD



ask a mexican!®

»GUSTAVO ARELLANO

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DEAR READERS: Behold your favorite Mexican's annual Christmas-gift guide, in which I give shout-outs to some of my favorite books that deserve your money this holiday season! And for once, I won't recommend my books—*Ask a Mexican!*, *Orange County: A Personal History* and *Taco USA: How Mexican Food Conquered America*—as gifts. . . . Oh, wait, I just did! In all honesty, while I always appreciate *ustedes* buying my *libros* and handing them out as *regalos*, the following items are just as *chingones*, if not more so.

Juan In a Hundred: The Representation of Latinos on Network News: It won't be published until early January, but preorder this masterful analysis of the paucity of Mexis on *la tele* and the laughable representations who do make it through. Author Otto Santa Ana is a UCLA *profe* who boils down reams of data into a clear, well-written analysis that will have you rooting for the demise of the networks.

Anything on Cinco Puntos Press: You might've read a recent *New York Times* story decrying the lack of Latinos in children's books. And while you don't necessarily need Mexis in a book to get Mexi kids reading (although I must admit, I always thought *Tales of a Fourth-Grade Nothing* was set on a Zapatista commune in Chiapas), the *Times* article was wrong: There are a *chingo* of children's and young-adult books featuring Mexis, and some of the best come from Cinco Puntos Press in El Paso. Run by my *amigo* Bobby Bird, one of the most Mexican *gabachos* you'll ever meet, Cinco Puntos' books are wonderfully illustrated, hilarious—and there's also great nonfiction for adults. Find more at www.cincopuntos.com.

Anything by Lalo Alcaraz or Sam Quinones: I plug these guys every year for a reason—not only are they *amigos* and mentors, but they're also the titans of their respective fields. Alcaraz, of course, draws awesome cartoons, but this year also saw the advent of his *pocho.com*, what *The Onion* would be if it were Chicano and funny (recent story: "Realization: Man watches *telenovelas* for boobs, not to learn Spanish"). And *Los Angeles Times* reporter Quinones just happens to be one of the best narrative reporters in the country, with his books, *True Tales From Another Mexico* and *Antonio's Gun and Delfino's Dream: True Tales of Mexican Migration*, the best takes on Mexico since *Insurgent Mexico*—and you should buy that one, *también!*

Tex(t)-Mex: Seductive Hallucinations of the "Mexican" in America: Another annual plug because it deserves it, this scabrous take on Mexicans in the American imagination is penned by the eternally brilliant, eternally *cochino* William Nericcio. Rumor has it his next *desmadre* appears next year—grab that one, too.

Barrios to Burbs: The Making of the Mexican-American Middle Class: Shout-out to *las mujeres!* USC professor Jody Agius Vallejo penned a brilliant look into the Mexicans whom Americans don't want to acknowledge: those who aren't poor or *cholos*. She makes her fluid arguments with stats, great citations and amazing anecdotes—the opening scene in her book is a taut surprise, written sans academia's stultifying pedantry.

An Atlas of Historic New Mexico Maps, 1550-1941: This gorgeous coffee-table book published by the University of New Mexico Press presents images of all sorts of maps, along with brief histories of them and detailed close-ups. Perfect for the nerd in your family—and you know every Mexican family has at least two.

And remember folks: when you wrap up these books, make sure to stuff them and some underwear in Xbox 360 boxes to trick the recipient—it's the Mexican way!

ASK THE MEXICAN

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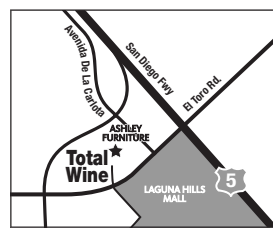
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the county»

Los Ovarios of Steel

» FROM PAGE 8

pretty body onstage,” Rivera continued. “I wanted to convey a message—that women could be as bad-ass as men. Look, Mexican society is going to be macho forever because that’s just how our culture is. But with so many people moving to the United States, it’s changing. Mexican women no longer just sit there, expecting men to support us. We can’t anymore—it’s too expensive. Either you get off your ass and make something of yourself, or you starve.”

Dominante, she did. Starting with novelty singles (“La Chacalosa” and “Las Malandrinas” translate as “The Jackal Woman” and “The Bad Girls,” respectively) that scandalized Mexican society in the late 1990s, developing depth with age, yet never losing her sense of humor (her 2009 smash single, “Ovarios,” demanded society consider ovaries as metaphors for courage the same way we lionize balls), Rivera transformed herself into someone without peer in American music. She had the ball-busting bravado of Janis Joplin sans the destructive streak; advocated the grrl-power of punk, but addressed real-life issues instead of the abstract; penned confessional dirges similar to those of Joni Mitchell, but backed by the hard-charging sway of *banda sinaloense* (her nickname was “La Diva de la Banda”); possessed the vocal and sartorial bombast of a Diana Ross or Cher, except she sang about substance and substances. Hers was a tough life—three divorces, a domestic-violence survivor, weatherer of continued snips by doubters who saw her as simultaneously too hood and too low-class Mexi-

can—but it was hers, and she performed it without shame.

And that’s what endeared her so much to millions of Mexican women and more than a few males. Rivera was the cousin whom the *tías* always clucked about; the *prima* who was a bit too loud, a bit too independent, but successful; the type of woman everyone wanted to be; the American success story Mexican immigrants want for their children. More important, Rivera never forget her hardscrabble roots, peppering her songs and performances with shoutouts to her hometown of “Playa Larga.” Though she reveled in luxury (her most recent home was a multimillion-dollar Encino estate), Rivera lived for the fans and always let them know that; her 2007 album, *Mi Vida Loca* (or “My Crazy Life”), memorably showed her flashing the hand signal for “West side” behind her back as she walked down the red carpet—the real Jenni from the block.

I’ll end this obit with the conclusion of my 2003 story, with the parting words Rivera spoke when I asked how society would remember her, words that in retrospect not only sound prophetic, but also prove Rivera had a plan for life even then that wouldn’t be stopped:

“They’re going to think of a woman who’s real. They’ll think about a woman who went through hell and back and never gave up. No one else has ever opened doors for me—I opened them myself. And people have a problem with women who do that. They have a problem when we’re no longer as passive and submissive as, say, their mothers were growing up. Too bad. I say what I say, and I do what I do. I’m me.”

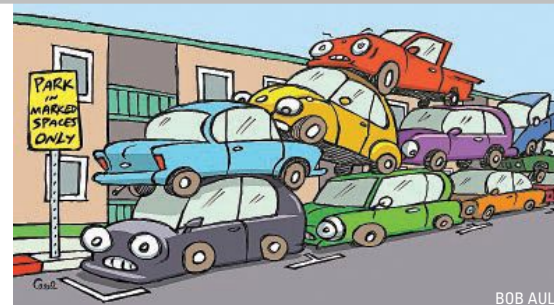
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HEY YOU!

» ANONYMOUS

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BOB AUL

that resembled a warehouse with lots of identical boxes stacked all the way to the ceiling. Your office conducts semi-annual inspections of our garages, so perhaps you should penalize folks at that time, and maybe they’ll clear their shit out and actually use their garages for their intended purpose. A motorcycle shop probably violates enough environmental-safety laws for you to be able to stand firm on a request to remove cans of lacquer and oil-soaked rags. The parking situation is so bad I actually get nervous each time I open my own garage. I half-expect another resident to zoom in ahead of me yelling out, “You snooze, you lose, asshole!” I think you’re the one who needs to wake up, Mr. Manager.

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The pIEd pIpER of pRINT

Can AARON KUSHNER save *THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER* and transform journalism in the process? By GUSTAVO ARELLANO

AARON BENJAMIN KUSHNER looked every bit the OC master of the universe ready to get his happy-hour on as he strolled into Mesa's lounge the evening of Nov. 27. Lanky; clean-shaven; wavy hair tamed to a perfect fade; dressed in an impeccably pressed, powder-blue, long-sleeved shirt and black slacks; and sporting a cocksure smile, he chatted with a young woman as they entered the Costa Mesa nightspot. She'd be the first to seek him out; within minutes of his settling into the lounge, clusters of people gathered around Kushner as if he were a preacher about to deliver the Good News to a sea of the damned—which is exactly what the 39-year-old was about to do.

The believers, about 80 in total, were members of Orange County's battered-down media landscape: bloggers, magazine publishers, PR flacks, college journalism professors, radio producers, newspaper reporters, all wanting validation for their craft. They were there for the Orange County Press Club's

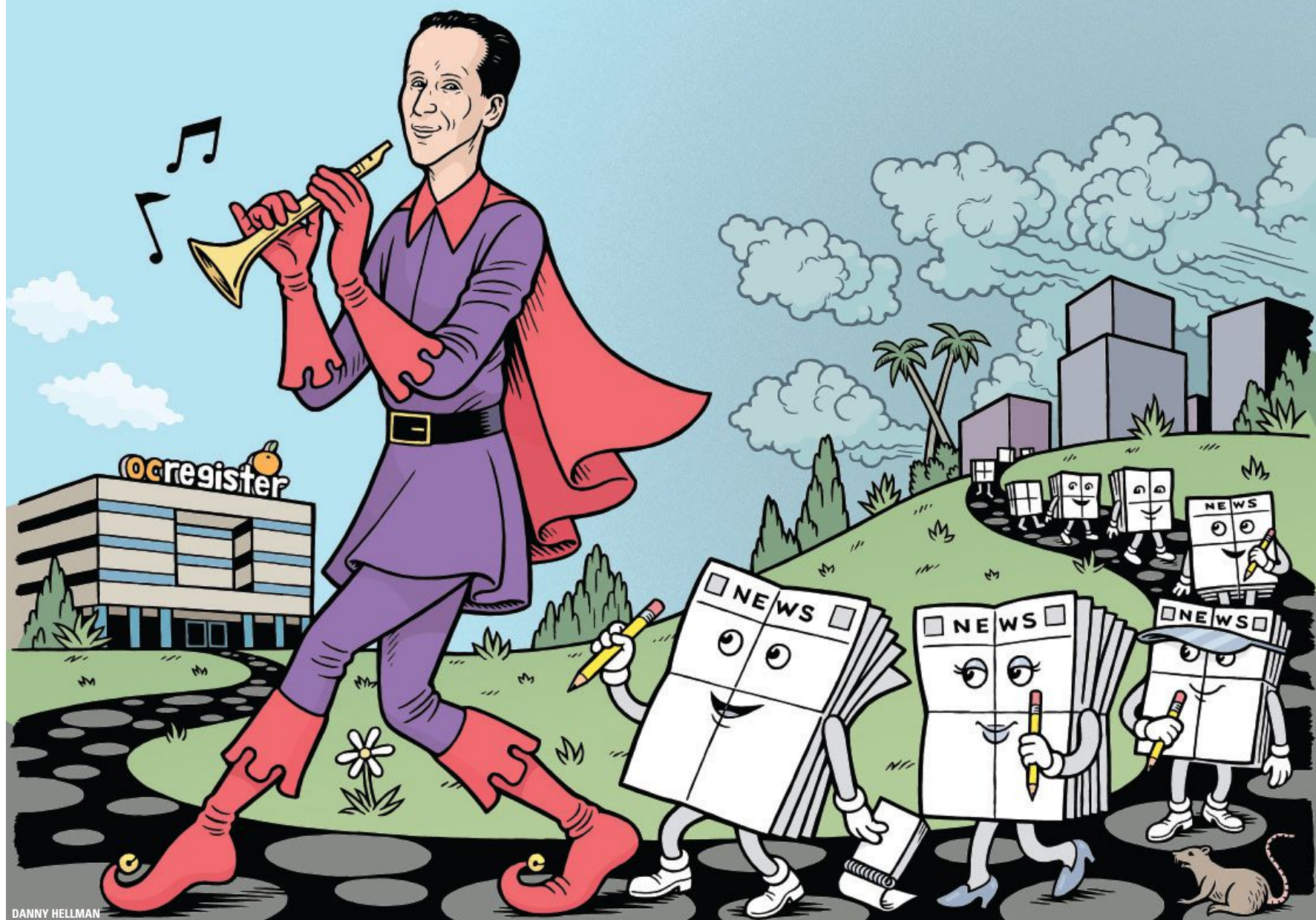
quarterly mixer, usually lightly attended affairs but tonight packed because the guest speaker was the Man Who'll Save Us All: Kushner. The new owner and publisher of *The Orange County Register* has gained national attention for a newspaper strategy out of *Field of Dreams*: If you build it up, readers will come. Discourage web hits for the sake of web hits, and reporters will come. Erect a paywall on your website and beef up the print edition, and people will subscribe. Then advertisers will pay. Then the revenue comes in, and journalism is saved.

It's a heretical strategy, especially in the midst of a 15-year period that has seen the dismantling of the American newspaper as we knew it, with shrinking circulation, perpetual staff reductions and declining readership not just aberrations, but the new normal, as aggregate websites and slideshows subsume the industry just as the Machines of *The Matrix* did to humanity. Yet since taking over the *Register's* parent company, Freedom Communications, in August,

Kushner and his team have launched an expansion spree not only unprecedented in 21st-century print journalism, but also almost unfathomable. Orange County's paper of record has hired at least 45 reporters and editors, with intentions to hire at least 30 more. The *Register* brought back a daily business page after eliminating it just a couple of years ago and introduced new standalone sections on food, automobiles and weddings—with plans for a Sunday magazine and more. Even the actual stock of newsprint is better, making the daily gleam in a way it hasn't for decades.

More important, the morale at the *Register* is back at the level of its glory days during the mid-1990s, when it beat back the *Los Angeles Times* in a bare-knuckles circulation war for Orange County, and the future seemed limitless because of a newfangled thing called the World Wide Web. "I remember those days," says a veteran *Register* reporter who requested anonymity. "Those were beautiful days."

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



DANNY HELLMAN



KUSHNER IN ACTION AT THE ORANGE COUNTY PRESS CLUB MIXER



PHOTOS BY KEVIN LIU

We haven't had days like that since—until now. Frankly, I still have to pinch myself every morning to remind myself Kushner is for real. But I still have to tell myself this is a forever thing, that it won't be a passing fancy."

And that was the overriding thought on the minds of attendees at the press club mixer, after Kushner finished his 10-minute spiel and took an avalanche of questions. Can you just will a paper to succeed in a time when media analysts maintain print is dead? Can someone with no previous newspaper experience become a modern-day Otis Chandler, transforming a laughable property into a money-making powerhouse, remaking the region it serves for the better?

"I think he's deluded," says a former *Register* reporter. "Good intentions, but crazy." Then she laughs. "That doesn't mean I won't apply for my job back, though."

ASK KUSHNER why he purchased the *Register*—why invest in journalism, period—and he'll give long, precise

answers delivered in a way that makes him sound as though he's the true believer he says he is.

"Why newspapers?" is an easy one," he says over the phone (he declined an in-person interview at his offices, saying a *Weekly* reporter roaming the *Register's* halls wasn't "particularly appropriate"). "They matter—a lot. As to why now? Why not? Sooner is better than later, and I've been working on developing a model of all the pieces to be able to publish a newspaper, to have something like *The Orange County Register* grow again and thrive. And the timing was that the prior owners were ready to sell.

"I've always felt that newspapers were important and valuable," he continues. "I don't know that there was a specific time—that 'Okay great, let's go buy a newspaper'—that made me want to buy the paper. Certainly for a bit I've been working full-time on newspapers. The reason that newspapers *do* matter is that manifestation is what binds communities together."

But ask the father of three a question

"FRANKLY, I STILL HAVE TO PINCH MYSELF EVERY MORNING TO REMIND MYSELF KUSHNER IS FOR REAL. BUT I STILL HAVE TO TELL MYSELF THIS IS A FOREVER THING, THAT IT WON'T BE A PASSING FANCY," SAYS A REGISTER REPORTER.

he's not expecting, or he doesn't like, and he'll laugh: an awkward, high-pitched laugh, the kind of haughty guffaw you'd expect from a Boston Brahmin. Or, better yet, he'll flat-out decline to answer. Ask where he's living in Orange County, and he'll say that's "private." Ask what hotel he stayed at his first time here or what restaurant he ate at, and he'll state, "I can't say."

The Massachusetts man had never visited Orange County until this spring, when he first realized he wanted to purchase the *Register*, and he admits he has not yet explored most of the county, spending every breakfast and lunch in the *Register's* cafeteria and most of the rest of his weekdays in his office. He had never "particularly read the *Register* on a regular basis" until purchasing the paper. Yet despite these shortcomings, he says with confidence that Orange County "is a wonderful place. Vibrant, great mix of people, great sense of itself. Great business infrastructure. Wonderfully robust nonprofit community. It's a fabulous place to have a great newspaper."

And of a paper he has owned for about five months, he says "I don't think there's many people in the newspaper business who don't know the *Register*. It's not like it's a small secret. Even before we got here, it was one of the better metro newspapers in the country."

So he says. Over the past decade, *The Orange County Register* has been an Improv of bad sketches, a smorgasbord of every embarrassing journalism trend heralded as salvation. It tried to start a

faux alt-weekly, *Squeeze OC*; that folded in two years. It debuted a daily tabloid, *OC Post*, consisting of shortened *Register* stories—done in two years. At one point, its website featured more than 40 blogs covering everything from the housing market in Huntington Beach to pets, from mothering to cosmetics to one devoted solely to the introduction of a 657 area code to northern Orange County; now, only 17 remain, and most are reportedly facing elimination (tellingly, most of the defunct blogs that still linger in the archives have a note saying the demise is due to a "shift [in the *Register's*] focus to more quality, informative content"). The *Register* created its own Wikipedia-style page about itself, hosted reader discussion boards, produced podcasts and video shorts, held reader focus groups and readers' polls, gave reporters web-traffic quotas, and even published "Vanity Fear," a 21-part, weekly serial in 2002 penned by staff writers that sought to emulate Armistad Maupin's legendary *Tales of the City* saga for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, but instead resulted in one giant, collective county yawn.

About the only constants in this time were the *Register's* boxy office building off the 5 freeway in Santa Ana; its legendarily retrograde readers (people so nasty that one year, *Register* reporters took it upon themselves to write an internal letter to editor Ken Brusica asking he censor them); and the ghost of R.C. Hoiles, the *Register's* longtime, legendarily can-

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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The piper of print

tankorous owner who transformed the paper from a backwater rag into a titan of American libertarianism, pushing Orange County onward to its unique rendezvous with conservatism—and forever branding the *Register* as a paper in which ideology took priority over good journalism. Instead, during this century, the *Register* became the news: layoff after reduction after firing after buyout after declining circulation report, all leading to the exit of Hoiles' descendants from the family business and ending in the bankruptcy of Freedom Communications in 2009. At one point, Marti Buscaglia was brought in to make history as the first Latina publisher of a major daily; instead, she declined the offer after it emerged that her résumé was faked.

And all the while, what made the *Register* essential reading in Orange County, for better or for worse, slowly disappeared, the victim of budget cuts and misplaced priorities. The token Vietnamese and Latino columnists. The in-house editorial cartoonist. The resident conservative columnist. The humor columnist. The film critic. A great food section. A full business page—this, in a county where captains of industry are considered as holy as Christ. Special investigative series. Community papers with their own teams of reporters the *Register* bought decades ago, once-proud dailies now reduced to throwaway weeklies staffed by kids two years removed from second-rate journalism schools back East. And more important, a retinue of talented reporters who either parachuted to other papers or took on PR jobs.

This is the paper Kushner wanted to buy?

He won't say how he found out about the *Register*, only allowing, "We have a very strong team, and some great financial backers, and when there are properties with what we want to do strategically, it's an easy process, from a financial perspective, [to pursue them]. We knew as soon as we started digging into the community and the business itself, that it was a great fit for what we wanted to do.

"I'm not a finance guy," he says. "I'm an operator. I live to build and grow businesses. The first thing that I did was to get a couple of weeks' worth of copies and look for the quality of the product. You have to understand—every newspaper exists only within the context of the community that it serves. You have to have a good feel for the community, for what's possible, even."

That's a general business strategy that has worked well for the multimillionaire, a native of Athens, Georgia, who graduated from Stanford University with a BA in economics ("with Honors," as his *Register* bio points out) and a master's in organizational analysis in 1994. While an undergrad, Kushner starred on the university's men's gymnastics team, a dynasty that won two titles in a row and finished runner-up in Kushner's senior year. He specialized in the rings and pommel horse, events for which careful choreography is essential not only to win, but also to merely survive. After graduating, Kushner moved to Chicago to work for the Boston Consulting Group, where he



KRUSHNER THINKS OC
IS A "FABULOUS
PLACE TO HAVE A
GREAT NEWSPAPER"

developed the idea that would earn him his first millions: ChangeMyAddress.com.

The idea now seems laughably obvious: help people, well, change their address online for bills, subscriptions, residency and utilities using a few clicks (the company still survives as MyMove.com). The website drew press praise and profits, and Kushner eventually sold it to a company based in the Boston suburb of Newton, moving there to become the company's vice president. Looking for an investment, Kushner bought Marian Heath Greeting Cards in 2002 (his grandfather and great-grandfather were greeting-card makers) with funding from outside investors and became its CEO. He grew the company by acquiring smaller greeting-card makers, including Renaissance Greeting Cards in 2005.

On the day the card companies' merger was announced, Kushner called an all-employees meeting. "When they opened up the door," a former employee told *Boston* magazine in a 2011 Kushner profile, "we got into a line like cattle, and there were people at the door with clipboards asking us what our name was, and they looked at us and said, 'Okay, you go upstairs, you go to the cafeteria, you go upstairs, you go to the cafeteria.' Once we started seeing who was in the room, we were like, 'Oh, my God! Oh, my God! Those people downstairs are going to be let go today.' And sure enough, that's what happened. We never got to say goodbye to them."

Almost half of Renaissance's 77 employees were laid off immediately. Kushner defended the layoffs to *Boston* by comparing the greeting-card industry to the newspaper industry, saying both needed to go through "some incredibly painful transitions" to survive, then complaining, "How anyone could think that we didn't love the business and understand the business and that I didn't have a great vision for the business and leadership for the business? I don't see how anybody

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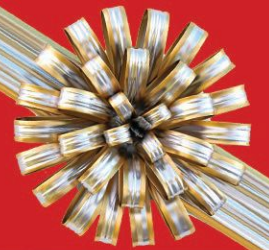
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The pied piper of print



BRUSIC AT HIS DESK IN THE REG'S GRAND AVENUE OFFICES

JOHN GILHOOLEY

could make that argument." He stepped down as Marian Heath CEO in 2009, claiming to *Boston*, "I had a vision for the business, and they had a very different vision, and they controlled the working capital, so we decided to move on." Kushner won't confirm whether he still holds a majority share in the company.

A year later, Kushner announced he wanted to own newspapers—and not just any fishwrap, but the *Boston Globe*, an ossified institution in a city where pedigree still means everything. He assembled a group of investors and advisers—some local businessmen, others with impeccable journalistic credentials (newspaper publishers; a former Time Inc. CEO; even Ben Bradlee Jr., son of the legendary *Washington Post* editor)—and called his group the 2100 Trust, the number representing the year, the idea that his company was in it for the long run. In the spring of 2011, they put in a bid reportedly worth \$200 million for the *Globe* and the other holdings of New England Media Group, including *Boston.com*, the *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*, and *Telegram.com*.

As he has done now, Kushner sounded the same notes about investing in journalism. "We are particularly pleased with the commitment of our growing investor group to the continued and expanded excellence of journalism in Boston and Worcester," he told the *Globe*. "When we have all of the pieces in place to not just purchase, but enrich the institutions, we look forward to making a formal offer."

But the city's establishment and the nation's media watchers dismissed Kushner's interest as that of a dilettante, and *The New York Times* (owner of the *Globe*) never seriously entertained the offer precisely because of that inexperience. As late as this January, Kushner still claimed he had a chance at the *Globe*. By then, he had already moved on to smaller papers in Maine, preparing to be a small-scale Hearst, and that's where his grandiose plans hit another batch of non-believers: reporters.

TOM BELL stays silent for a beat, then laughs when asked how his first encounter with Kushner went. "Not very well," he says. "He demanded a lot of cuts to our contracts."

Bell is a general-assignment reporter

"IT'S NOT ONLY IMPORTANT FOR THE REGISTER, BUT FOR EVERYONE IN THE INDUSTRY FOR THIS JOURNEY TO SUCCEED," SAYS EDITOR KEN BRUSIC. "THE OTHER PATH IS TOO DREADFUL TO IMAGINE—A SUICIDAL PATH OF MORE LAYOFFS."

for the *Portland Press Herald*, part of MaineToday Media, owner of three dailies and a weekly in the Pine Tree State. He's also the president of the Portland Newspaper Guild, which represents most of the workers at the *Press Herald* and the newsroom at the *Morning Sentinel* in Waterville; he has held that position for five years. In that role, Bell and other Guild leaders met with Kushner after 2100 Trust announced on Jan. 6, 2012, that it was taking a controlling interest in MaineToday Media, shortly after the *Globe* sale went nowhere.

"Our vision, our plans, start with great journalism," Kushner told a *Globe* reporter about the MaineToday Media purchase. "That is the heart of our business model, why our investors are involved."

Chris Harte, a 2100 Trust investor and former *Press Herald* publisher, told the *Bangor Daily News*, "We are acutely aware of the history and impact these newspapers have had on their communities, and our most important job will be meeting the high bar that has been set. Our goal is to invest and grow this business by delivering professional, trusted news to Maine people."

Bell, for his part, says he and other Guild leaders were "optimistic" before meeting Kushner, but that meeting quickly soured. "We believe he thought he had us over the barrel," he says. "He was polite, but he seemed to be someone who felt he had all the cards."

Kushner, Bell says, presented them with a list of demands—50 in total. He wanted to increase the workweek from 37.5 hours to 40 hours, with no additional pay, and for employees to increase their pay-in to health, life and dental insurance. He planned to cut overtime, reduce salaries for salespeople, and cripple the union

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The pied piper of PRINT

by being able to outsource work and hire non-guild members to new positions. In addition, Kushner planned to make the *Press Herald's* editorial writer and columnist positions non-union and no longer keep five full-time photographers.

The guild officers were stunned. "He seemed to want to . . . appeal to our sense of journalism as an important profession," Bell says. "We came to not trust him or his business plan. He was never able to convince us that he had a business plan we could believe in.

"He never really went into much detail of his plan, either," Bell adds. All Kushner would reveal was that he wanted "high-level quality, yet somehow he would find savings to make it happen. And we didn't think he had the abilities to carry it out."

Realizing his hamfisted approach wasn't going over well, Kushner quickly backed off most of the demands. Nevertheless, the guild publicly rejected Kushner, and the 2100 Trust backed out of its bid. Bell and others instead convinced a Maine billionaire to give MaineToday Media a multimillion-dollar loan in exchange for equity in the company and a board seat; since then, Bell says, his reporters' contracts remain intact, the size of the *Press Herald's* newsroom has doubled, and they're investing in the future with a business plan with which the guild is comfortable.

Of his standoff with the Portland Newspaper Guild, all Kushner would say is "We did, indeed, have a respectful difference of opinions as to the best path forward for the institutions that serve those communities. They wanted to protect the status quo. As we have shown in Orange County, we are committed to a different path of robust hiring and growth, of what we provide to subscribers and advertisers."

But Bell adds, "It's a little odd for us, reading these stories [about Kushner's vision] and to hear about him hiring all these reporters. What we saw . . . I'm not sure how it's going to play in Orange County in the future. We were unconvinced, but maybe we were wrong, and we hope we're wrong.

"My advice" to *Register* reporters, he concludes, "is to be careful of how they manage their own personal finances. Don't get in a situation where you have a big mortgage and big car payments because this might not work out."

THE *REGISTER'S* news team is based out of the third floor of the paper's Santa Ana building. The elevators open up to a mini-lobby that features the front page from a year ago, pictures from important stories, and the paper's crown jewel: the 1996 Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting, awarded for its brilliant series of stories about the UC Irvine fertility-clinic scandal.

That was the past; the future is represented in a nearby hallway featuring 36 pictures and brief bios of the *Register's* new hires. A display case contains 12 pictures; the other 24 are taped to the wall around it.

The *Register's* Ken Brusic looks at the pictures, then walks across the office,

mostly empty now because it's early in the morning. He points out desks that are currently vacant but will soon host new reporters, plus a wing that will be modified as the *Register* hires up. "I never thought we'd run out of room," the soft-spoken Brusic says. "Especially as we were running people out."

He has been the editor since 2002, a well-liked man in the newsroom who started with the paper in 1989 as a projects editor. He possesses a humble, fatherly personality of a humanities professor—and maybe that explains why Brusic feels "anxious" under Kushner.

"I don't want to screw this up," he says from his office overlooking the freeway. It's been decorated with photos and clips of past *Register* triumphs; outside his door is a flat-screen television showing the most-viewed stories on the *Register's* website for the day. "It's not only important for the *Register*, but for everyone in the industry for this journey to succeed. The other path is too dreadful to imagine—a suicidal path of more layoffs. But Aaron and Eric [Spitz, CEO of Freedom Communications] are putting a stake down and saying, 'No, nope. That's not the path.'"

It's been under Brusic that the paper has seen its darkest days, days that took a toll on him and his reporters. And the future looked even bleaker when the hedge-fund owners who rescued Freedom Communications from bankruptcy announced in 2010 that they were going to sell off the company. No serious bidders emerged until this year, and none of them looked appealing to Brusic. One was MediaNews Group, run by Dean Singleton, a notorious skinflint who decimated the *Long Beach Press-Telegram* and has long had his eyes on the *Register* to complement his collection of Southern California dailies. Another interested party was someone whom Brusic cryptically referred to as "buyers from the South": Doug Manchester, owner of what was once called the *San Diego Union Tribune* but has turned into a national laughingstock because the paper now trumpets his beliefs, friends and developments. "We were kept in the dark by corporate," Brusic says, referring to the sale of his paper. "All we heard were rumors."

In June, Brusic got a note from corporate: The new owners wanted to meet with him. Lunch would be in Newport Beach at the ritzy Pacific Club, where the county's business elites cut their deals far from the public. Brusic wasn't told that the 2100 Trust was the buyer, but one of his reporters found out and gave Brusic a crash course on Kushner before the meeting. He was initially skeptical but was won over by the meeting, and he relayed that enthusiasm to his deputy editors.

After the deal was officially announced, Kushner asked Brusic if he could address the news team, all 350-plus of them. For company-wide meetings, the *Register* usually holds them at the in-house R.C. Hoiles Auditorium, but Kushner refused: He wanted to greet everyone in the newsroom. Chairs were rolled over from desks; people stood or sat on the floor. From the middle of the newsroom, Kushner immediately charmed everyone.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

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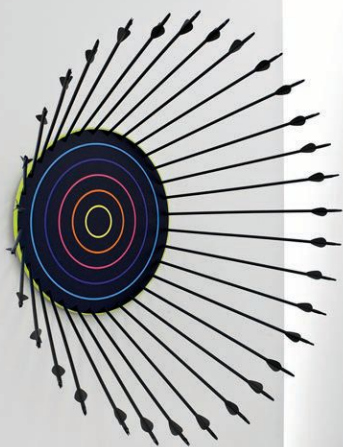


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"What he says is well-practiced, well-rehearsed, well-believed, but it comes from his belief system—it's not marketing chatter," Brusic says. "He didn't come into this cold—he did his research. . . I told them they were darn lucky. It would have been very difficult with a paper like the *Globe* or the *Los Angeles Times*. We're willing to take risks, willing to change."

Kushner announced Brusic would remain editor of the *Register*, then sent him off to hire. It's not a blank check, but the results show otherwise. The community newspapers—which Brusic admits were "crappy little tabloids that weren't very strong"—are transforming into broadsheets, with plans to turn some of them into dailies. Every large Orange County city will have its own veteran reporter, as well as a cub scribe to apprentice under them, a mentor system the *Register* used for decades to develop in-house talent. Names long familiar to readers and the newsroom—culture writer Anne Valdespino, food-section editor Cathy Thomas (who took a previous buyout but continued to work as a freelancer)—have returned, with more expected to come.

And Brusic is also trying to make waves by hiring big names. During the 1990s, then-*Register* publisher N. Christian Anderson III—who as editor during the 1980s revamped the paper into a respectable publication—infamously told reporters during a meeting that the *Register* was "not a destination newspaper." Now, Brusic is tasked with making it one. Now working full-time is Kedric Francis, longtime editor of *Riviera* magazine and a fixture in Orange County journalism; he had previously worked as an adviser for the *Register's* luxury magazine, *Coast*. Last month saw the debut of Bill Johnson's thrice-a-week column; he did the same for the *Register* back in the 1990s before moving on to the now-defunct *Rocky Mountain News*, where he won the 2007 award as best general interest columnist for the National Society of Newspaper Columnists (although he doesn't come without controversy; in 2005, Johnson had to admit he made up a story in which he claimed an anti-abortion activist threatened to kill him during his *Register* days). This month saw the debut of Brad A. Johnson, a James Beard award winner for his food writing. Every week, the Inside the OC *Register* blog (one blog management didn't ax) trumpets a new hire, almost always repeating Kushner's mantra of quality journalism.

"There is a sense of possibility now, and that's the most important thing," Brusic says. "[My reporters] never lost hope, but the idea of possibility constantly narrowed over time.

"But we'd be fools not to have fears" of whether Kushner's plan is sustainable, Brusic adds. "It's part of my anxiety. When I talk to people, I want them to have a sense of anxiety. Whatever happens, it will not be the people of the newsroom who will be part of [any] failure of that enterprise.

"I worry about everything," he concludes. "If we can't succeed, it can't succeed anywhere else."

KUSHNER'S SPEECH for the Orange County Press Club wasn't much—if you've heard him speak once, you've heard everything he's willing to say. He stayed mum on rumors he's interested in bidding for the *Los Angeles Times* and didn't reveal that three days later, Freedom Communications would announce the sale of the *Colorado Springs Gazette*, an important part of R.C. Hoiles' libertarian legacy. But the media crowd hung onto his every word, asked about 40 minutes' worth of questions and craned to hear his responses over Mesa's regular crowd and music, who didn't give a damn as they checked their smartphones.

But the journalists? They want to believe. They *have* to believe.

"Journalists are rooting for Kushner to succeed, for him to find the formula that will bring newspapers back to life," said Jeff Brody, a former *Register* reporter who's now a professor of communications at Cal State Fullerton, a couple of weeks after the meeting. "But that doesn't mean they aren't skeptical about how someone with no background in news can succeed where more experienced editors and publishers have failed. Of course, maybe that's what is needed. . . I wish Kushner good luck because I want newspapers to survive."

"I hope it works," says Jennifer Muir, a former *Register* county-government reporter who's now the assistant general manager at the Orange County Employees Association (OCEA). Kushner invited her and OCEA head Nick Berardino to his offices recently, part of a strategy to host county movers and shakers and ask what they need of the *Register*. "I think that Aaron seems to have some very good ideas, and with his focus on good journalism, I can only be hopeful. And maybe it's naive of me—I don't know—but I believe that good journalism is important, and if a paper invests in good journalism, it has a shot of surviving. And that's what it appears it's doing."

Kushner is already proclaiming success. In September, he sent out a memo trumpeting the fact the *Register's* daily home delivery had increased 3.4 percent over the previous year, even as the latest Audit Bureau of Circulation figures show a slight dip for daily circulation and digital subscriptions from March to September of this year.

"If you have friends and colleagues who you believe can help us grow, please share the opportunity with them and encourage them to reach out directly to Ken Brusic or any of our deputy editors," Kushner wrote. "We have openings in almost every area of our content group, and if someone fabulous comes through and we don't have a specific opening, we'll do our best to make one."

And that's exactly what attendees hoped for at the end of Kushner's Press Club speech. A phalanx of people lined up to meet him, some with résumés in hand. He was all smiles and confidence. If they couldn't meet Kushner, they sought out other *Register* reporters and editors—anyone who could get them into the Promised Land.

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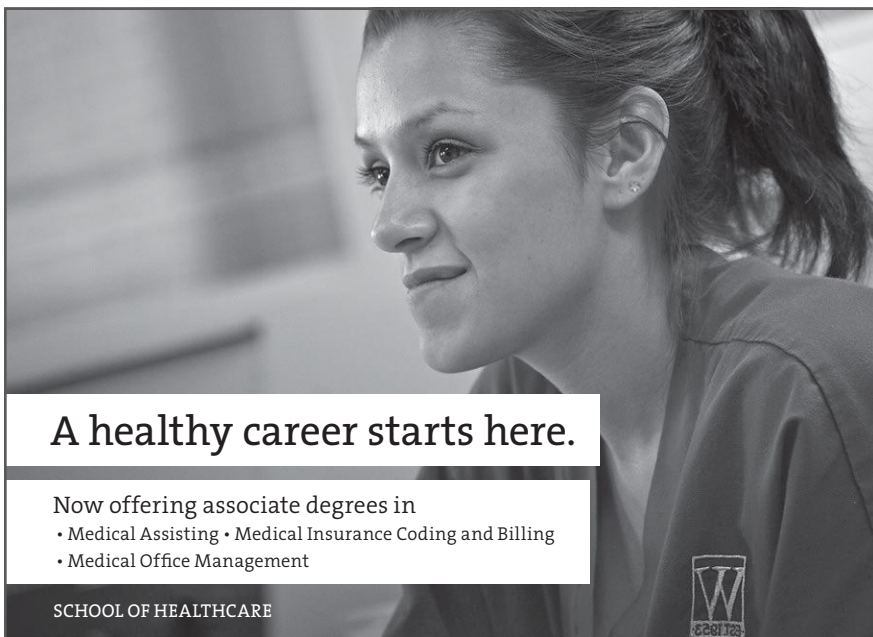
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Light of the Moon

It's a Wonderful Life: A Radio Play

Fullerton's STAGEstheatre gives this quintessential Christmas story an imaginative new twist—set as a 1940s radio broadcast. Watch as a talented group of actors brings to life dozens of beloved characters (George, Mary, Clarence, Mr. Potter, just to name a few) and re-creates the timeless tale of humble and kind Mr. Bailey morbidly considering suicide on Christmas Eve, only for an angel to intervene and show him how important he really is to the world. Adapted by Joe Landry and directed by Amanda DeMaio, *It's a Wonderful Life*:

A Radio Play injects fresh life into one of our favorite holiday classics—don't miss this limited run, showing until the end of the month.

It's a Wonderful Life: A Radio Play at STAGEstheatre, 400 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 525-4484; www.stagesoc.org. 2 & 8 p.m. Through Dec. 30. \$18-\$20. —ERIN DEWITT

[CONCERT]

Paying Homage

Album Attack: Elvis Costello

Jesse Wilder's Album Attack returns with probably its most ambitious night yet—not one, but two ad-hoc

bands covering not one, but two Elvis Costello albums, with no openers or anything else to detract from the overall Costello quotient. For anyone who has ever particularly cherished the controversial *Saturday Night Live* performance of "Radio Radio," which you should start cherishing as soon as you get a chance if you can find a surviving copy on the Internet, this is your night of nights: members of American Males, Cowboy and Indian, Grow Young, California Lions, and Rockford present *Armed Forces* and (a personal favorite) *This Year's Model* in their Elvis-y entirety.

Album Attack: Elvis Costello at the Prospector, 2400 E. Seventh St., Long Beach, (562) 438-3839; www.prospectorlongbeach.com. 9 p.m. Call for cover. 21+. —CHRIS ZIEGLER

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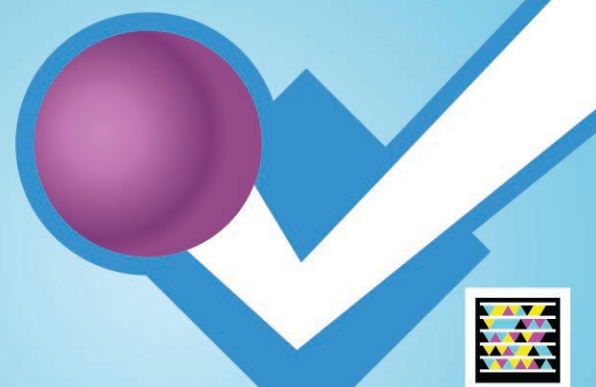
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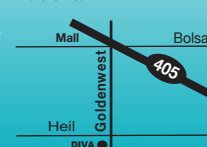
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sun/12/16

[BENEFIT]

Helping Hands Hurricane Sandy Benefit Concert

While Hurricane Sandy's wrath devastated the Caribbean and northeastern United States, the ferocity of a few committed individuals has resulted in millions in relief funding to restore the damaged coast. DiPiazza's in Long Beach is joining the ranks by hosting a series of benefit concerts for all ages on Dec. 16 and 23, featuring teenaged performance acts joining together in song and pizza to raise money for Sandy's victims. A donation of \$15 at the door goes to the Robin Hood Foundation to provide Christmas dinners for those left without this holiday season.

Hurricane Sandy Benefit Concert with False Puppet, Tiffany Alvord, Yours Truly, Tremor and more at DiPiazza's, 5202 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, (562) 498-2461; www.dipiazas.com. 2 p.m.; also Dec. 23. \$15. —AMANDA PARSONS

[BALLET]

En Pointe THE NUTCRACKER

Complete with live symphony orchestra, children's choir, special guest dancers and about a million brightly colored tutus, the Long Beach Ballet's rendition of *The Nutcracker* is hailed as the most successful performance in SoCal—and this year, the show celebrates its esteemed 30th anniversary. Helmed by artistic director David Wilcox, this whimsical story about a dreamy little girl, a nutcracker prince and a mouse king is gilded with a cast of more than 200, a real horse, a flying sleigh, scenery created by former Disney designers and some pyrotechnics (you know, just for good measure). "We have everything I can think of to make it thrilling," states Wilcox. We'd like to think Tchaikovsky would approve.

The Nutcracker at the Terrace Theater, 300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, (877) 852-3177; www.longbeachballet.org. 2 p.m. Through Dec. 23. \$28-\$65. —ERIN DEWITT

mon/12/17

[FILM]

The Dean of Acting *A Portrait of James Dean: Joshua Tree, 1951*

In contemporary Hollywood, many actors clamor to be the "outsider" star, branding themselves as the next celebrity to rage against old age with reckless abandonment. But this image stems from one man—the rebel without a cause: James Dean. His extraordinary life is the subject of books and poetry by the great Frank O'Hara, which center on Dean as a

star—or his tragedy. But what was he like on the journey to the top? Well, here's your chance to find out. This week, the Art Theatre screens the independent film *A Portrait of James Dean: Joshua*



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Tree, 1951, which focuses on Dean in Los Angeles on the cusp of his career, his complicated sexual identity and the steps he took to become an iconoclast. Plus, as part of the closing-night festival, writer/director Matthew Mishory and the cast and crew will be in the audience.

Portrait of James Dean: Joshua Tree, 1951

at the Art Theatre, 2025 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 438-5435; www.arttheatrelongbeach.com. 3 p.m.; check website for additional dates and times. \$11. —JOSEPH LAPIN

tue/12/18

[FAMILY EVENT]

Winter Wonderland Disney On Ice: Dare to Dream

Princess Tiana, Cinderella and Rapunzel put on their skates and hit the rink for *Dare to Dream*, the latest creation from Disney On Ice. The night begins in New Orleans, as Tiana fights to fulfill her dream of opening a restaurant, then it's off to the bayou with Prince Naveen to break the frog spell that was cast by an evil witch doctor. Next comes Cinderella searching for true love in her magical kingdom, which leads her to help Rapunzel experience life beyond her tower with a mission to see the annual floating lanterns. For the finale, the three princesses come together onstage to officially welcome Rapunzel into the royal court. And, of course, Mickey, Minnie, Donald and Goofy

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are along for the dream-making journey.

Disney On Ice: *Dare to Dream* at the Honda Center, 2695 E. Katella, Anaheim, (800) 745-3000; hondacenter.com. 7:30 p.m. Through Dec. 23. \$12-\$75. —JESSICA FORD

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wed/12/19

[CONCERT]

Still Standing

Vince Neil and Great White

The two acts performing tonight at the City National Grove have survived—how should we say?—absolute fucking tragedy but managed to pull out of the wreckage and keep on truckin'. Headliner Vince Neil of Mötley Crüe has experienced more than a few run-ins with the law, including several battery charges, a host of drunken-driving alle-

gations and a vehicular-manslaughter sentence. And his opening act, Great White, will probably never escape the stigma of the unbelievably tragic Rhode Island club fire that took the lives of more than 100 concert-goers and band guitarist Ty Longley back in 2003. But through the worst of it, these two musical outfits found each other, and on this End of the World Tour, currently traveling the country, they can revisit the good old days of their rock careers and look ahead to brighter futures.

Vince Neil with Great White at the City National Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, (714) 712-2700; www.thegroveofanaheim.com. 8 p.m. \$58-\$75. —ERIN DEWITT



Knows When You're Sleeping

THE EIGHT: REINDEER MONOLOGUES

The Chance Theater is definitely on the naughty list this season, if only for its annual production of Jeff Goode's ridiculously cheeky *The Eight: Reindeer Monologues*. Get a behind-the-sleigh look at what really happens at Santa's workshop—harassment, rumors, lecherous advances—straight from the reindeer themselves, and they've got a lot to bitch about. If you haven't seen this slightly offensive, completely provocative holiday romp, now is the time—and if you've seen it once, come back for more because with a roster of rotating actors, no two shows are the same. So hang the stockings with care, put out a plate of cookies and a glass of milk, and be sure to keep that pepper spray close by.

The Eight: Reindeer Monologues at the Chance Theater, 5552 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim Hills, (714) 777-3033; www.chancetheater.com. 8 p.m. Through Dec. 22. \$30-\$35. —ERIN DEWITT

thu/12/20

[CONCERT]

Feliz Navidad

El Vez Mex-Mas

El Vez (formerly known as Zeros punk rocker Robert Lopez) is the undisputed king of the Hispanic Elvis impersonators, and don't think you can casually step on his blue-suede *zapatos*. While Elvis is his grand novelty achievement—mixing up the Memphis boy's standards with Chicano politics in "Immigration Time" ("Suspicious Minds"), "En El Barrio" and others—he also delivers some *muy caliente* renditions of Bowie, Dylan and Iggy Pop. This month, join him and his Elvettes for some holiday cheer that's sure to include glittery fashions and the timeless classics "Poncho Claus" and "Brown Christmas"—and don't forget to break out that awesome rompo.

El Vez Mex-Mas at Detroit Bar, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 624-0600; www.detroitbar.com. 8 p.m. \$15. 21+.

—STACY DAVIES

[CONCERT]



Holiday Green

THE IRISH TENORS

The three ethereal voices of Finbar Wright, Anthony Kearns and Ronan Tynan make up the Irish Tenors—and have sold out every seat at the Hollywood Bowl, Radio City Music Hall, Carnegie Hall and more giant, prestigious venues around the world. These three classically trained vocalists came together in 1998—as any regular PBS viewer knows, since the group star in specials for the channel—and dedicate themselves to bringing the bewitching and radiant sounds of Irish song to the world. This week, they visit Southern California for a special Christmas show titled "Holiday and Hits," for which the trio perform a selection of traditional music from the Emerald Isle along with festive seasonal songs.

The Irish Tenors at the Cerritos Center for Performing Arts, 12700 Center Court Dr., Cerritos, (562) 916-8501; www.cerritoscenter.com. 8 p.m. \$35-\$90. —ERIN DEWITT

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LIZ MONROY

The San Francisco Treat

Embarcadero brings a little bit of the Bay Area to the boonies we call RSM

BY EDWIN GOEI

You're on the 241, heading as far east as you can go before hitting the Cleveland National Forest. The LA radio station you're tuned to begins to crackle with static. You look at your navigation system and realize you're now geographically closer to Lake Elsinore than you are to Disneyland—yet you're still in Orange County. A sign you pass says you're now entering Rancho Santa Margarita, a town most of us have no reason to venture to unless you live there or have business to conduct in one of those blocky buildings that undoubtedly came from the same set of architectural plans. You exit, turn a corner, and then find yourself on El Paseo, a street that quickly narrows and meanders through a sprawling, master-planned shopping center in which you encounter a Bed Bath & Beyond, that outpost of Brüxie you've read about, and another outlet of the ubiquitous Mi Casa Mexican restaurant. But somehow you still feel very far from home.

You arrive at your destination, a place that was raved about by a friend who lives in Foothill Ranch. A few weeks ago, he sent you photos of the food he ate via text message, and it looked good enough to make the journey. Besides, you haven't been out this way since the last time you took a picture of yourself with thumbs up at the intersection of Antonio Parkway and Avenida de Las Banderas. You captioned it "The Sexiest Street Corner on Earth" and thought it was hilarious.

The 1-year-old restaurant, called Embarcadero, is San Francisco-inspired. You can only think of two other Bay Area-themed eateries around these parts: Boudin,

which is actually San Francisco-based, and Orange's Alcatraz Brewing Co., which tries very hard to make you *think* it is. Embarcadero is more like the latter. It's a not-too-heavy-handed Southern California interpretation of NorCal culture and food. There are Golden Gate motifs and a shimmering nighttime mural of the skyline, the Transamerica Pyramid smack-dab in the middle. You are pleased to find there's cioppino and clam chowder. But you look closer at the menu and realize Embarcadero is not unlike every restaurant that serves modern American cuisine from here to Peoria. It offers a reliable list that includes sliders as part of the appetizers, a caesar as one of the salads, and pizzas on dense finger-thick crusts. The rest consists of burgers, sandwiches, steak-heavy mains, and something rich made of chocolate and ice cream as one of the desserts.

You discover the excellent clam chowder is thin rather than thick, beige rather than white; as at Fisherman's Wharf, there's the option of it coming with a bread bowl you nibble on but never finish. The cioppino, though, is gargantuan. You've seen actual sinks smaller than the vessel into which is poured the brick-red stew, and the soup is so hearty and viscous it could conceivably transform three plates of pasta into seafood linguine if you had a ladle. But this is a standalone dish, to be eaten just as the Italian fishermen who invented it intended—with nothing more than bread for dipping. If the tomato broth is a little flat, you excuse it because the kitchen didn't skimp on the seafood. Every morsel has been cooked well—the shrimp still wiggles, the clams

still squeak, and the fish melts in moistness. Though it's not at all like the cioppino you once had in Ghirardelli Square, it's a lot better than Embarcadero's signature salmon dish. The slab may have been properly roasted and bundled in the middle with threads of crispy potato, but it sits on bland spinach, on top of blander julienned butternut squash, the whole thing too much for the small puddle of citrus beurre blanc to do anything about.

Embarcadero's other popular dish, the soy-ginger-braised, osso-bucco-style short rib, is the polar opposite, almost too salty unless you eat every forkful with twice as much mashed potato. When you run out of spuds, you resort to using a few of the tater tots you ordered for an appetizer. They are made unnecessarily stinky with truffle salt, which you figure justifies the upcharge, but then discover the conical container is filled only halfway with tots—the rest is stuffed with salad greens.

The best dish turns out to be a so-called tuna "handroll," something that was never intended to be handheld because it's actually just some seared tuna squares laid atop a cylindrical stack of edamame beans, chunks of avocado, mango-papaya chutney and a hit of Sriracha. You aren't bothered that it doesn't seem to have anything to do with San Francisco, but you leave somehow relieved that nowhere did you find a trace of Rice-A-Roni.

EMBARCADERO

22332 El Paseo, Rancho Santa Margarita, (949)709-2266; embarcadero-oc.com. Open Sun.-Thurs., 5-9 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 5-10 p.m. Dinner for two, \$25-\$75, food only. Full bar.

HOLE IN THE WALL

» GUSTAVO ARELLANO

Hot for Hotteok

KOO'S CATERING TRUCK

In the parking lot of Arirang Supermarket, 9580 Garden Grove Blvd., Garden Grove.

Koo's Catering Truck is a misnomer in many ways. It's not, for instance, associated with the late, great Koo's Café of local DIY fame. It doesn't operate as a catering service—instead, it's permanently parked across three parking spaces at the Arirang Supermarket in Garden Grove's Little Seoul district. And while it's technically a truck, its menu doesn't aspire to the encyclopedic heights of a *lonchera* or the endless experimenting of a luxe *lonchera*. All it sells is coffee, water and the fabulous Korean pancake called hotteok—but calling it a pancake is a disservice to one of the finest, cheapest desserts in Orange County.

In reality, hotteok is more a dessert gordita, with wheat flour taking the place of masa. It's similarly rolled into a thin circle with a stuffing—usually a caramel-esque syrup containing honey, cinnamon, sesame seeds and nuts. It's then placed on a griddle so it crisps on both sides, so the inside steams up angrily after a bite, so that it keeps long after cooking and remains hearty. But while the gordita is savory, the hotteok is sweet; it's the pastry tamale of Korea. Hotteok has never become a staple at Korean restaurants in Southern California for reasons I've never been able to fathom, but it is a staple in Korean households come wintertime, and you can find ones frozen or in dough form at any of OC's Korean markets throughout the year.

But if you want it fresh, then Koo's Catering Truck is it in OC. Open from around lunchtime to the evening, it has parked at Arirang since 2010 and did a stint before that at a since-shuttered Korean market in Tustin, making it OC's first non-Mexican *lonchera* long before Kogi's was an inspired-by-a-blog idea in Roy Choi's mind. I think Koo's sells its hotteok for \$1.50—I say "I think" because I really don't know, given I always opt for the four-for-\$5 special. "Be careful; they're hot," the stoic Korean woman who runs the truck always warns, and she never lies—let them cool down for half an hour, and the filling still clings to your tongue like boiling Jell-O, the outside still steaming where not crisped brown. Each has a circumference somewhere between a CD and 45 rpm record, and each is sweet and earthy, chewy and perfect. One is fine; two is gluttony. But four will make you happy for a week—that is, until you eat all of them in one sitting, a fact as inevitable as gridlock on the northbound 55 freeway in the afternoon.

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LIZ MONROY

Meet the New Hans

Cole Gatchell of Hans' Homemade Ice Cream

Chef or cook is an all-encompassing term for one who creates food. This week's subject may dabble in some casual dining, but Cole Gatchell's specialty lies in dessert. Trained by Hans himself, this confectioner can whip up an arsenal of flavors to satisfy a loyal clientele.

Your earliest food memory:
Picking kumquats off my parents' tree in the back yard when I was 6.
Favorite meal growing up:
Spaghetti and meatballs.
Your best recent food find:
All-you-can-eat at Gyu-Kaku.
Favorite flavor:
Praline pecan.
Culinarily speaking, Orange County has the best:
Pho.
What fast food do you admit to eating?
In-N-Out Burger because it's freakin' awesome.
What is your beverage of choice?
Apple cider.
How long is the ice cream-making process?
Ten to 20 minutes, then 10 hours of freezing.
Are there any flavors you'd like to experiment with?
Yes—salted caramel, gingerbread, cake batter, chocolate-covered strawberries.
One food you can't live without:
Egg whites because they keep me in good shape.
Where was your most recent meal?
Here. I had the egg salad in a lettuce wrap.
Best culinary tip for the home cook:
Buy a business from a 72-year-old German.
Is there a way to avoid brain freeze, or is it just a fact of life?
Fact of life, but I've never had it.
What do you think of people who take photographs of their food?
I think they enjoy excellent presentation.
Favorite chef:

ON THE LINE

» ANNE MARIE PANORINGAN

The grandma down at Pho Kimmy. Tell us a fact that most people don't know about ice cream.

It's pretty darn easy to make.

Weirdest thing you've ever eaten:

Escargot.

Favorite places to eat (besides your own):

Cal Beach Sushi and Koba.

You're making breakfast. What are you having?

Eggs. A lot of them.

Weirdest customer request (and did you do it?):

Somebody wanted us to make a sandwich with toasted bread and a scoop of mint chip ice cream. And yes, we did.

When you're not in the kitchen, what are you doing?

Lifting weights.

Hardest lesson you've learned:

Be diligent with any investment you do, even if it's with friends.

Last song playing:

"Language" by Porter Robinson.

Do you still do personal training?

A little bit.

What's your favorite childhood memory?

Playing "Capture the Flag" at my dad's church.

What were you doing five years ago?

Building houses.

Last movie watched? How was it?

Wreck-It Ralph wasn't as good as I thought it'd be.

Last thing you looked up online:

Pictures of [actress] Paige Peterson.

Do you have any skills that are non-food-related?

I have a million skills. I play a bunch of musical instruments. I can breakdance. I know sign language.

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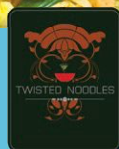
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food »

Not Just Weekday Toast

'Have You Tried the Toast?' at Gypsy Den Anaheim

Yes, really. Toast. We're recommending you go to a restaurant and order . . . toast. Not just toast, but whole-grain toast.

Before you click over to Fast Food Maven in despair, stay with us here. This is not just any toast. It's true, most whole-grain bread tastes as though it has had sawdust mixed into it, but not at the Gypsy Den in downtown Anaheim. It comes with Greek yogurt, almond butter, raspberry jam, half a banana and dark honey with the comb still inside.

I, too, blinked in disbelief the first time it was suggested to me, but by the time you finish combining toppings (yogurt and jam together, honey and banana, almond butter and banana . . .), you'll be sold. Now, it's all I ever order for breakfast there. Get a big cup of coffee to go with it, and if you want a little more protein, get a boiled egg (the first time I've ever ordered pre-boiled eggs and had them come out absolutely perfectly). It's a surprisingly substantial breakfast, and you can tell people you just



DAVE
LIEBERMAN

EATTHISNOW

» DAVE LIEBERMAN

had coffee and toast for breakfast.

"Have You Tried the Toast?" isn't available at the Gypsy Den in Costa Mesa or downtown Santa Ana; you'll have to head to slowly gentrifying central Anaheim for your fix. *From a Dec. 5 Stick a Fork In It post.*

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ANDROID

Basic Mexican Bliss

Merced's is as great as Long Beach gets for no-frills
tacos of the soft and hard variety

The day after eating an amazing potato-pear-and-duck-fat-fries laden meal at Santa Ana's Chapter One, I couldn't help but crave food that was simpler. Something about the way each dish there contains multiple flavor-complex ingredients birthed from the modern gastronomy movement had me missing some basic staples. Or, as my friend asked when the pear-shaped, riced potato stuffed with duxelle and a panko crust arrived, "What about a good, old-fashioned taco?"

Luckily, Merced's is just around the corner from my house. Taco Tuesday is usually the time when I take advantage of the restaurant's sidewalk-adjacent walk-up window, but since I had an hour to kill and was in a tipping mood, I sat down in one of its six booths and let the nice waitresses take care of me.

Taking advantage of the \$1 taco special, I ordered two of the hard-shell variety and one "soft" version (a.k.a. just a tortilla) with chicken, steak and al pastor, respectively. The hard-shell tacos were more crunch than actual meat, and topped with a shredded-cheese mix possibly purchased from a cooler at the Vons down the street. But the soft taco—oh, man. That was one of the best "street" tacos I've ever tried, with moist, orange bits of al pastor covered in a creamy salsa roja that made me feel as though I was getting deep in some *comida callejera*.

LONG BEACH LUNCH

» SARAH BENNETT

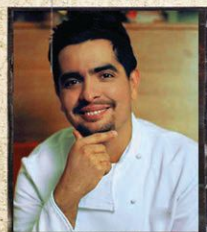
But that wasn't all. I asked for a rice-and-beans-accompanying combination plate, eschewing my usual cheese enchiladas for the often-suggested taquitos dorados—cigar-sized beef taquitos topped with lettuce, guacamole, cotija and salsa roja. This was exactly the kind of simple I was hoping for: guacamole made from chunks of avocado and bits of tomato; light, crispy tortillas wrapped around shredded, marinated beef; refried pinto beans topped with a pinch of queso; and Spanish rice perfect for scooping into taquito cavities.

Besides being home to some of the best quick-and-humble Mexican food on Broadway (take that, Mi Lupita!), Merced's is also home to one of the more epic Long Beach murals I've seen. Stretching from the doorway to the back of the narrow dining area, the painting details a view of the shoreline from the bottom of Alamitos Avenue. Eat in and marvel at the handiwork, or take your lunch and walk a few blocks down to the water for a glimpse of the real thing. *From a Dec. 10 Stick a Fork In It post.*

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For the Love of Logan

A mural honoring the WWII vets of Santa Ana's historic barrio blooms outside La Chiquita—but needs your help

Carlos Aguilar is perched on a rickety scaffold above Washington, looking more like a local carpenter than an artist. But his appearance belies a genuine passion for the arts and a fire for what he does. His current project is a mural dedicated to the World War II vets of Santa Ana's historic Logan barrio, painted on the side of La Chiquita Restaurant. After coming to the States from Michoacán in 1990, Aguilar settled in Mission Viejo, where he was initially exposed to the fine arts by his first mentor/teacher at Saddleback College. Later moving to Logan, he mimicked the art drawn on jailhouse letters and colorful bandanas by locals; he eventually painted several pieces at Santa Ana markets and such—but the scope of the La Chiquita mural is a challenge.

The almost-100-year-old wall is cracked and a bit unstable in parts, and the rough texture of the plaster eats paintbrushes. Aguilar has to make do with what materials he can scrape together, and being on a shoestring budget, he's considerably less well-equipped than the weekend warriors painting that same, stale view from the gazebo next to Las Brisas in Laguna Beach. Carlos told me he "wanted to do something for the neighborhood, something that says we're proud," but he has to pass on art when opportunities arise to work construction jobs. He started on Memorial Day, painting the top portion first. Many people approved. Neighbors showed up with old photos, and some of the veterans themselves have dropped by to wish him well.

La Chiquita itself, of course, is an amazing throwback to a bygone era, the second-oldest Mexican restaurant in Orange County and a close facsimile of one of my favorite spots as a little kid, the long-gone El Poce Cafe on Mission Boulevard in San Gabriel. The original structure was built in the early 1900s as a small grocery store. In subsequent years, it was gradually expanded, and the space between the store and the house next to it turned into a *tortillería*. Joe Jimenez started selling tacos from that location, and the small house next to it was absorbed and turned into a restaurant.

It's a quiet, non-*taquería*/non-*mariscos*/Cal-Mex kind of joint, filled with harmless *gabachos* from the courts and offices downtown during lunch; at dinnertime, there's a mix of locals and folks willing to make the drive from South County. The albóndigas are to die for, broth-y and tomato-y with just a hint of cumin and mint in the meatballs. Sammy Montoya has owned it for 20 years or so; a consortium of regulars got together and helped him to purchase it when the heirs of Joe Salcido, the previous owner, were no longer interested in the operation. He is partnering with Aguilar, providing some financial and logistical support for the mural.

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DIATRIBEWITH DAVE
» DAVE MAU

And those veterans are still around. Five days a week, 88-year-old Paul Durón commutes to the neighborhood from Corona del Mar to work, although he probably doesn't have to. In the house he grew up in, located across the street from La Chiquita, he sits quietly at his desk drafting. As a kid in the 1930s, he worked in the market at La Chiquita. After volunteering for the U.S. Army, he landed at Utah Beach on D-Day and was attached to the U.S. 7th Armored Division as it drove across Europe. Stationed north of Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge, he was part of the Allied counteroffensive that thwarted Germany's last-ditch effort to change the tide of battle on the Western Front.

Durón's victories continued after his return. He attended college on the GI Bill and earned an engineering degree. He then founded his own company, designing and producing cryogenic systems and rocket engines at his own factories, including one in France, where he had fought. The local, who went from Logan kid to rocket scientist over the course of his lifetime, has come out of retirement three times since the 1970s. He says he likes to stay busy.

Stories such as Durón's are the kind Aguilar seeks to immortalize. The *Weekly* and I have set up a donation page for the Logan mural—go to gofundme.com/1kvjlw if you want to help out. Don't be a cheap-skate; forsake a Manhattan during my Dinner With Dave nights at Memphis At the Santora, and pitch in a few bucks, won'tcha? From a Nov. 28 *Stick a Fork In It* post.

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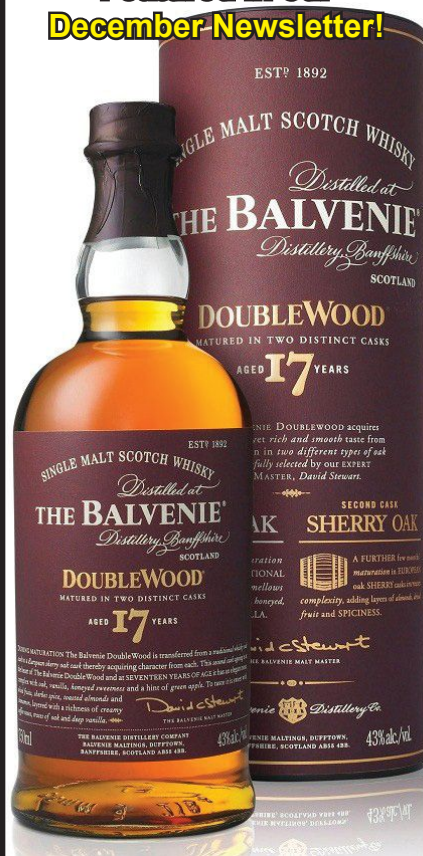


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See the rest of Forrest Cokely's review on hitimewine.net! PDFs of our [December newsletter](#) and [gift guide](#) are online now-- and remember, ship anywhere in CA for \$9.99/case!

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DRINK OF THE WEEK

» EDWIN GOEI

The Spicy Lover at South of Nick's

This column usually highlights serious cocktails and manly drinks sipped and reviewed by Gustavo Arellano and Dave Lieberman, gents who can tell you what brand of rotgut went into it simply by sniffing. This isn't one of those articles. When I troll for drinks to feature, I'm looking for funny names or weird ingredients. And if it comes with an umbrella, even better. Since trying the Miablo at 370 Common one evening, which used a tequila infused with ghost chile, sprigs of cilantro and a scorched pineapple, I'm now fascinated with spicy cocktails—drinks that'll burn you two ways.

I found another candidate in a jalapeño-infused margarita at South of Nick's. But it was the Pop Rocks that cinched it. Yes, Pop Rocks!

The Spicy Lover is one of 10 varieties of margaritas South of Nick's pours to sip with food that ought to be the main reason you visit. But it's still essential—no, required—that you order some form of margarita. Two of them, the base models, can be had by the pitcher and pair best with the complimentary supply of the excellent, never-ending, hot-from-the-fryer chips and salsa. The rest are made uncon-

ventional with toasted coconut, watermelon and muddled cucumbers.

But the Spicy Lover has to be the kookiest of the bunch.

THE DRINK

Not only does it feature the jalapeño tequila and a Pop Rocks-covered rim, but there are also muddled blueberries and the restaurant's house-made sweet-and-sour. There's a less noticeable chile burn in the sipping than 370's Miablo, and the fruitiness of the blueberries and the sweet-and-sour linger prominently, softening the tequila before it gets to your throat. And the Pop Rocks? They turned out to be my least favorite part of the drink—frankly, they were duds. After a while, most of the Pop Rocks lost their snap-crackle-pop and ended up just sticking stubbornly to the rim. You feel sorry for the dishwasher who has to scrub all that caked-on gunk off the glasses later. But, still: *bueno* drink! From a Dec. 7 *Stick a Fork In It* post.

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THE DWARVES ARE BACK INTOWN

Slouching Toward Erebor

The Hobbit gets neither there nor back again
BY SCOTT FOUNDAS

Welcome back to Middle-Earth. It has been nearly a decade since writer/director Peter Jackson set foot on J.R.R. Tolkien's hallowed ground, signing off on a spectacular trilogy of films adapted from the English author's *Lord of the Rings* novels. There were box-office billions and well-earned Oscars aplenty, and then two subsequent Jackson projects—*King Kong* (2005) and *The Lovely Bones* (2009)—that suggested the filmmaker might have been stunted by his own mega-success. (With its distended Depression-era prologue and a running time nearly twice its 1933 predecessor, *Kong* in particular seemed as thick around the middle as its director now appeared slim.) So it was no real surprise when Jackson announced he would produce two films based on Tolkien's *The Hobbit*—the single 1937 volume that launched the Middle-Earth mythology—and even less surprising when Jackson pulled a Jay Leno on his own handpicked director, Guillermo del Toro, in order to hold the reins himself. (Del Toro retains a co-screenwriting credit for his contribution.)

Of course, succession is never a tidy business, nor is that of making prequels into beloved franchises. Rest assured, Jackson's *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* perpetrates no Jar Jar-size transgressions. Rather, it's reverential to a fault, with the director and his regular collaborators, Fran Walsh (Jackson's wife) and Philippa Boyens, hewing so closely to Tolkien's slender text that, at the end of three hours, we're barely 100 pages in, with mere sentences on the page having been inflated into entire sequences onscreen. The detailed appendices Tol-

kien included with the final *LOTR* story, *The Return of the King*, have also been plundered for inspiration, and the result is a journey whose most unexpected element is just how little ground it covers. (Recently, it was announced that the two planned *Hobbit* films will now be three, with the next installments set to arrive in 2013 and 2014, respectively.)

Set some 60 years before the events depicted in *LOTR*, *The Hobbit* tells of another unassuming Shire-dweller's grand mythopoeic adventure in the company of wizards, elves and—this time around—a merry band of 13 dwarfs. The hobbit in question is Bilbo Baggins—uncle of Frodo—played to great effect in the *LOTR* films by Ian Holm and here, as a younger man, by the likable Martin Freeman (*Sherlock's* Iraq-vet Watson). A fussy, pipe-smoking dandy of minimal ambition and even less curiosity, Bilbo is shaken from his life of leisure by a visit from that wise, wandering wizard Gandalf the Grey (Ian McKellen). And if there is one inviolable constant in this first chapter of *The Hobbit*, it's McKellen's delectable mixture of world-weariness and coquettish vanity, which might be the default posture of any British acting great resigned to Hollywood's inexhaustible need for sorcerers, mutants and Jedi masters.

Gandalf wants Bilbo to join the dwarfs on their journey to reclaim Erebor, a once-prosperous dwarf kingdom long ago decimated and claimed by the fire-breathing dragon Smaug, which now lies in wait, guarding its hoards of gold. But *The Hobbit* takes nearly an hour just to get out of Bilbo's hobbit hole, with much of that time devoted to a long night of drunken dwarf merriment

(including not one, but two musical numbers), during which you can just about feel the hair on your feet growing longer. For all their Wagnerian bombast, the *LOTR* films proceeded at a clip, with lots of story to tell and spirited new characters lurking around every bend. There was exuberance in the filmmaking, too, as if Jackson—who cut his teeth on some of the most outlandish, low-budget splatterfests of the 1980s and '90s—still couldn't quite believe he'd been allowed to make these movies. They were generous entertainments that you didn't have to be a Tolkien convert to enjoy—they made one out of you. *The Hobbit*, by contrast, feels distinctly like a members-only affair. It's self-conscious monument art, but is the monument to Tolkien or to Jackson himself?

Even once Bilbo and company take to the hobbit highway, the pacing is leisurely verging on lethargic, fitfully enlivened by meetings with colorful beasts: giant, Cockney-accented trolls that resemble talking phalli; a goitered goblin king (amusingly voiced by Dame Edna him/herself, Barry Humphries); and stone giants that give new meaning to the expression "mountain men." A few welcome *LOTR* faces also pop up along the way, including elvish royalty Elrond (Hugo Weaving) and Galadriel (Cate Blanchett) and the magisterial Christopher Lee as the wizard Saruman, not yet corrupted by the forces of darkness. As for the baker's dozen of dwarfs, with the exception of their noble leader, Thorin (Richard Armitage), they never register as more than an amorphous, knee-high mass.

It should go without saying that all of this is executed at an exceptional level of craft, with Jackson and the real-life

wizards of his Weta Workshop once more bringing Middle-Earth to life with rich detailing and seamless integrations of live action and CGI. But in the moment of *Avatar*, *Life of Pi* and *Harry Potter*, such technical mastery is ever more the rule, not the exception. So Jackson has one-upped the competition by making *The Hobbit* the first feature film to be shot in 3-D at 48 frames per second. What that means, in layman's terms, is that when the cameras rolled on *The Hobbit*, the film (or, rather, the high-definition video) was moving at twice the speed—and hence capturing twice the information—of both traditional 35mm film production and the "24p" HD video that is rapidly hastening film's extinction. And your reaction to this, in layman's terms, is likely to be either "Wow, cool!" or "WTF?"

Available for viewing only in select cinemas in major cities (the rest will feature a standard 24-frame presentation), this "high-frame rate" *Hobbit* features exceptionally sharp, plasticine images the likes of which we might never have seen on a movie screen before, but which do resemble what we see all the time on our HD television screens, whether it's *Sunday Night Football*, *Dancing With the Stars* or a game of *Grand Theft Auto*. (Indeed, most TVs now have a menu setting that can, if you so desire, lend this look to everything you watch—a setting appropriately christened by some gearheads as the "soap-opera effect.") Whereas video-shot "films" have labored for years to approximate the look of celluloid, Jackson goes whole hog in the opposite direction, the idea being that this acute video quality comes closer to the way the human eye perceives reality. Fair enough, but the reality Jackson conjures isn't quite the one he intends: Instead of feeling as though we've been transported to Middle-Earth, it's as if we've dropped in on Jackson's New Zealand set, trapped in an endless "making of" documentary, waiting for the real movie to start.

For the record, I returned to see *The Hobbit* a second time, at 24 frames, and found it more aesthetically pleasing but no more dramatically engaging. At any speed, the movie only springs to full life late in the day, during the first meeting of Bilbo and the tragic creature who will come to be known as Gollum (once again played by the sublime Andy Serkis), a hobbit reduced to a quivering, schizophrenic mass by his fidelity to a certain gold ring. Suddenly, in one long scene consisting of nothing more than two characters trying to outwit each other in a game of riddles, Jackson the storyteller seems to overtake Jackson the technocrat. The old magic returns, and for a fleeting moment, *The Hobbit* feels truly necessary, a triumph of art over commerce.

THE HOBBIT

was directed by Peter Jackson; written by Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens, Jackson and Guillermo del Toro, based on the novel by J.R.R. Tolkien; and stars Martin Freeman, Ian McKellen, Richard Armitage and Andy Serkis. Rated PG-13.

OC WEEKLY

ZONE PAGES

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opening

THE HOBBIT: AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY See "Slouching Toward Erebor," page 35.

ongoing

FLIGHT The yammering about "Oscar gold" and Denzel Washington's potential three-peat will soon reach a deafening pitch, but such noise can only embarrass a fine character study like *Flight*, whose prevailing tone is a heavy melancholy. The mood is there from the opening, where William "Whip" Whitaker (Washington) is waking in a bottle-strewn hotel suite, last night's company fishing her thong from behind a recliner. Much the worse for the wear after his long weekend, Whip gets ready for work with a snort of coke, and is young again as he swaggers into the cockpit for a morning flight—Whip, you see, is a commercial-airline captain. It's not Whip's shabby state, however, that eventually puts his plane into a sudden free fall. Drawing on a lifetime of experience, Whip improvises a miraculous plan that brings craft and passengers down more or less safely. In order to hush up a medical report of Whip's potent blood-alcohol level at the crash scene and to coach him through the investigation, a lawyer, Hugh Lang (Don Cheadle), is brought in to do damage control at the behest of the pilot's union rep, Charlie Anderson (Bruce Greenwood), an old Navy buddy of Whip's and custodian of the open secret of his drinking. Anderson's opposite is Whip's dealer, Harling, played with dirtbag bonhomie by John Goodman. Calm and chaos commingle beautifully in the crash-landing set piece as handled by director Robert Zemeckis, making his first live-action film since 2000's *Cast Away*. It is not surprising that Zemeckis' handling of spectacle would be undiminished, but he hasn't lost his touch with actors, either, coaching Washington into one of those rare performances that suggests much more than it shows. (R) Nick Pinkerton. *Countywide*.

HITCHCOCK Early in *Hitchcock*, Alfred Hitchcock (played by Sir Anthony Hopkins with a sack of fat connecting chin to neck) walks the red carpet at the premiere of his 1959 chase film, *North By Northwest*. "You're 60 years old!" shouts a reporter. The scene is an announcement that Hitchcock will be the kind of Hollywood movie in which veterans on the verge of obsolescence figure out how to beat the industry's system of cycling out the old in favor of the new by changing with the times on their own terms. For Hitchcock's Hitchcock, this means breaking away from starchy "baubles" like *North By Northwest*, and exploring riskier territory. "What if someone really good made a horror picture?" he wonders. Hopkins' imitation of Hitchcock's distinctive vocal cadence—the accent and heaviness of delivery, as if each word was rolled in bacon on its way out—is initially disarming, but the performance seems less convincingly human as the film wears on, failing to build on its first impression. Scarlett Johansson as Janet Leigh looks like Scarlett Johansson, and distractingly so. More painful are the attempts to transform Helen Mirren, the international gold standard of GLFs, into a dowdy woman-behind-the-man; her wig could not be shittier. Unfortunately, *Hitchcock* is a movie about bygone Hollywood that's distinctly a product of Hollywood circa now. It bears the influence of the kind of reality TV in which the subject's career is the excuse for the show, but in terms of screen time what they actually

do for a living is relevant only in that it puts them in glamorous locales and in contact with potential catalysts for stock, soapy side drama. (PG-13) Karina Longworth. *Countywide*.

KILLING THEM SOFTLY An adaptation of George V. Higgins' 1974 novel *Cogan's Trade*, Andrew Dominik's *Killing Them Softly* anatomizes a self-policing underground economy of junkies, killers, and administrators to indict a present-day mainstream world by suggesting that the criminal satellite economy and the "straight" superstructure are functionally the same. It's a movie that shows, and then tells, tells, and tells again, its vibrant conjuring of contemporary cynicism felled by Dominik's lack of faith in his audience's ability to connect thematic dots. The film is set in 2008, giving hit man Jackie Cogan (Brad Pitt, on killer-cool autopilot) the chance to scoff at a Barack Obama speech evoking the American dream: "America isn't a country; it's just a business," Cogan declares. Other than deliver that, Pitt doesn't have a whole lot to do. Cogan enters half an hour in, after ex-con Frankie (Scoot McNairy) and his junkie prison buddy Russell (Ben Mendelsohn) have held up a poker game managed by Markie (Ray Liotta). Cogan is hired by a Mob administrator, played by Richard Jenkins, to orchestrate the killings necessary to restore confidence in the underground gambling economy. Cogan tries not to kill anyone he knows face to face (the resemblance of his policy of "killing them softly, from a distance" to drone warfare is among the film's few subtle allusions), so he insists on subcontracting a gunman from New York, Mickey (James Gandolfini). Gandolfini only appears in two scenes, but he gives the film's best performance as a man drowning in masculine/midlife crisis, mooning over a "piece of ass" from his past. This talk is strange, florid, disgusting . . . and really not all that different from the gender stuff dredged up by the just-concluded election cycle. (R) Karina Longworth. *Countywide*.

LIFE OF PI A stacked-deck theological inquiry filtered through a spectacular *Titanic*-by-way-of-*Slumdog Millionaire* narrative, *Life of Pi* manages occasional spiritual wonder through its 3-D visuals but otherwise sinks like a stone. It's no shock that Ang Lee brings to his high seas adventure graceful and refined aesthetics devoid of any unique signature or pressing emotion, as the director has proved himself a skillful craftsman without an imprimatur to call his own. Here, that anonymity results in slavish, proficient devotion to his source material, Yann Martel's 2001 novel. The story concerns the upbringing of Pi (newcomer Suraj Sharma) in India, his unbelievable experiences surviving a shipwreck aboard a life raft also occupied by a Bengal tiger, and his post-rescue efforts to convince Japanese officials that his tale is true—a three-part structure that's framed by the adult Pi (Irrfan Khan), recounting his

tale to a nameless Writer (Rafe Spall). A struggling Caucasian American novelist who has been told that Pi's saga will convince him of God's existence, the Writer—who looks like he just came from a Banana Republic modeling shoot—is a colonialist appropriator of Pi's story, which he plans to turn into his own novel. Lee ignores such thorny sociopolitical dynamics, opting instead to couch this framework as further proof of the divine magic of storytelling. Lee stages the freighter's demise with a thrilling immediacy, taking full advantage of 3-D, and culminates with a shot of an underwater Pi gazing at the vessel as it descends to the bottom, its lights twinkling like flickering eyes. Still, the story's relentless articulation of its thematic aims proves a buzz kill, and the film spoon-feeds rather than enlightens. (PG-13) Nick Schager. *Countywide*.

LINCOLN Much has already been written about Daniel Day-Lewis' interpretation of the 16th U.S. president in Spielberg's *Lincoln*, and specifically about the reedy Midwestern tenor he adopts, derived from the often-mocking historical documentation of Lincoln's contemporaries. A sharp contrast with the stentorian elocution actors tend to adopt for the great emancipator, it's the most superficial and immediately apparent facet of this somehow almost 4-D character made flesh by Day-Lewis: a vivid evocation of a man no living person ever knew, and what amounts to the best guess of arguably the best actor of his generation. So that's one of the challenges Spielberg confronts: squaring the Georgia white marble of the Lincoln Memorial with the flesh-and-blood reality we can never really know—evoking the man without diminishing the leader. The director's other challenges include relating the complications and subtleties of political maneuvering, and the inherent suckiness of the biopic form. Spielberg solves that by lensing the portrait through a single event: the fight to pass the 13th Amendment through the house of representatives. The film is studied and often somber, but it is also hugely entertaining, a bitchingly fun story of political gamesmanship, influence trading, patronage, cronyism, and outright bribery. This Lincoln is quietly ironic, an indulgent storyteller, a hugely charismatic leader. A politician by turns charmingly persuasive and iron-fisted. A melancholic who suffers deeply, forced to barricade his grief behind a facade of steadiness and disarming humor. A father who sprawls on the floor with his young son, and a husband whose wife's madness is no match for his affection. Day-Lewis is just crazy good. (PG-13) Chris Packham. *Countywide*.

PLAYING FOR KEEPS Gerard Butler, playing George, a former soccer great now dodging bill collectors in suburban Virginia, speaks in his natural Scottish accent in the romantic comedy *Playing for Keeps*. The brogue is remarked upon at least three times, with one character calling it "charming"—which

it is, insofar as it distinguishes Butler here from the non-Scottish guys he played in *The Ugly Truth* (2009) and *The Bounty Hunter* (2010), rom-coms that we can now pinpoint as the opening salvos of the war on women. Although less hateful than those earlier movies, *Playing for Keeps*, directed by Gabriele Muccino (*The Pursuit of Happyness*, *Seven Pounds*), isn't especially kind to the ladies, either. Three-fourths of the female roles are manipulative, sad soccer moms—of various socioeconomic and marital status—written into the script (by Robbie Fox) only to try to bed recovering philanderer George, who coaches their kids and is trying to make things right with his ex-wife (Jessica Biel) and son, Lewis (Noah Lomax). That Lewis' age in one scene is given as 10, and then, shortly after, nine, gives you a sense of how much care and thought was put into this movie. Yet it's not entirely forgettable. I'll long be haunted by Dennis Quaid's manic performance as a palm-greasing dad who seems to be under the influence of bath salts—tweaked-out acting that matches the camera movements. (PG-13) Melissa Anderson. *Countywide*.

RED DAWN Single-mindedly action-oriented to the point where John Milius' original seems ruminative, this new *Red Dawn* is handled by promoted stunt coordinator Dan Bradley, whose highest accomplishment here is the heroes' initial escape through an invading North Korean army's tightening roadblocks. The sequence rides on snap-decision adrenal instinct, with Matt (Josh Peck) off-roading the family's Dodge Ram around backyard pools and the disjointed, dashed-off design of the scene fitting the total disorientation of the experience. But once America falls and Matt's brother Jed (Chris Hemsworth) and his nascent Pacific Northwest insurgency—called the Wolverines, after the brothers' high school football team—has been battle-tested and born again hard, Bradley sticks to the same "film the hell out of everything and hope it all shakes out in the editing booth" approach. What should be *Red Dawn*'s centerpiece—the Wolverines' tactical assault on a police station that the occupying forces have converted into their headquarters—is scarcely more legible than the first panicked moments of takeover. Perhaps Bradley feels obliged to blitz the audience to keep us from focusing on the manifold improbabilities here. How could North

Korea, a malnourished, ingrown nation of 25 million, hope to enforce martial law on the vast, densely forested, and well-armed Pacific Northwest? What high school quarterback would be wearing a Dinosaur Jr. shirt in 2012? It's no surprise to learn that North Korea is a hasty, post-production substitution for the Chinese who, in the movie as initially scripted and shot, had come to collect on the U.S.'s massive overdue debt. Soon Hollywood will have perfected the art of movies that batter no one's sensibilities, except that tiny minority who have a shred of aesthetic discrimination. (PG-13) Nick Pinkerton. *Countywide*.

SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK Director David O. Russell is still doing penance for *I Heart Huckabees*, a wonderfully nutty 2004 passion project exploring the desperate search for meaning within corporate America. *Silver Linings Playbook* feels more personal than *The Fighter*, his last feature, but it also feels like the movie version of a brilliant but unbalanced mind on too many edge-sanding meds. Released from the psych hospital where he was sent after a marriage-ending manic fit, Pat Solitano (Cooper) moves back into his childhood home. Cooper spits out such lines in an unmodulated, rapid-fire assault, his eyes wide and shining. Russell trusts us to draw on, like, every movie we've ever seen to recognize this is what the fearlessness of the mad looks and sounds like; the twist is that Pat's parents—superstitious amateur bookie Pat Senior (Robert De Niro) and the sweetly overbearing Dolores (Jacki Weaver)—speak the same way. The scenes in the Solitano home are a cacophony of mile-a-minute monotone. They're the best, most alive parts of the movie. Like many assholes, Pat brands himself a "truth teller"; he is, of course, the only person who can't see the truth about himself, which is that he's incapable of empathy. It comes as no surprise that the vehicle for this transformation is a slow-building romance with a bruised young widow played with feisty authenticity by Jennifer Lawrence. Manic as it might be stylistically, *Silver Linings Playbook* maintains too even of an emotional keel. It's a film about the alienated that makes sure to alienate no one, a movie depicting wild mood extremes that never rises or falls above a dull hum of diversion. Russell has made a great movie about American malaise; this isn't it. (R) Karina Longworth. *Countywide*.

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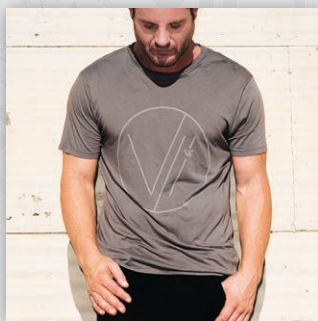
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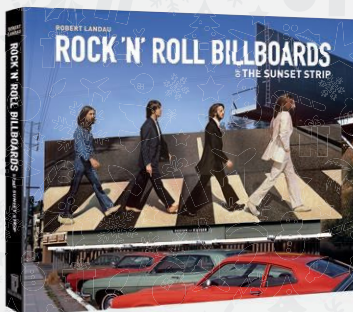
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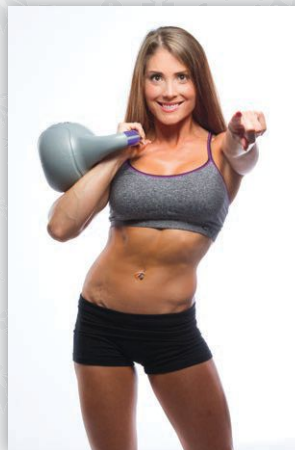
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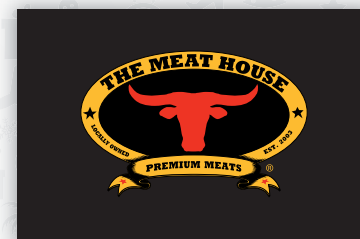


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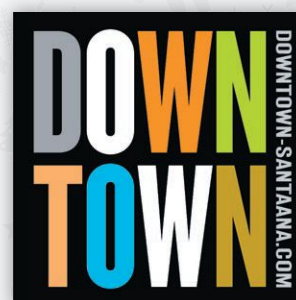
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All In the Family

The agony and the ecstasy of Joshua Paskowitz
BY TAYLOR HAMBY

Joshua Paskowitz recalls his childhood as the youngest of the Paskowitz clan with a variety of adjectives: “tragic,” “bullshit,” “valuable,” “magical.” Dorian “Doc” and Juliette Paskowitz and their nine children are widely known as the First Family of Surfing, and the eccentricities that professional surfer/Stanford-graduated physician Doc imposed on his family—traveling around the country for more than 20 years in a camper, no formal education, surfing almost every day—are the stuff of folklore.

“We grew up in Third World countries getting stabbed and shot and rabies and scorpions and all that kinds of stuff,” Joshua recalls.

The clan’s endless travels led to places with no electricity or diversions, so family members wrote, drew and created music to pass the time. “[There was] just the ocean and the sky and the surfboards and our family and the camper,” he says. “So . . . anything that was internal, that you could bring out, were all things that we, by necessity, gravitated toward.”

Paskowitz left his parents and the camper life when he was 13, going on to live several lifetimes’ worth of adventures—wandering the streets of San Clemente, sleeping on the side of the 5 freeway while snorting heroin and coke, befriending bands such as Sublime (fun fact: he taught Bradley Nowell’s son how to surf), opening for the Rolling Stones and Red Hot Chili Peppers, scoring

a hit with 1998’s “Got You (Where I Want You)” with a band called the Flys.

After leaving music, he went to work with his brothers as a surf instructor at the prestigious Paskowitz Surf Camp for a few years before winding up at an art gallery after a few odd jobs. His wife inadvertently inspired him to begin painting. “I bought my girl a canvas because I thought it would be really romantic to paint her a painting,” he says. “So it went four years, and I never painted the fucking thing.”

By that point, Paskowitz had lost his job and his home. He took a look at the canvas and decided it was time to tie up at least one loose end in his life. “So I started painting and painted on this thing for four months,” he says. What emerged was a beauty: his wife as an angel in full golden armor and holding their son. The son has a caduceus in one hand and a sword in the other; to the side is their daughter. Paskowitz himself is represented as “a double-headed dragon thing” that he admits looks like an H.R. Giger monster.

When the painting was complete, he says, “I was like, ‘This is really satisfying.’ When I was working on that, it was more like for therapy, but then as I was doing it, I was like, ‘I’m kinda shitty as a web designer. I kinda suck as a fuckin’ medical-equipment-specialist person. . . . You know what? I can draw the fuck out of a unicorn. I’ll draw the shit out of a dragon!’ It was something I was confident in.”

So Paskowitz began focusing on visual

arts, creating paintings of what he calls “the Paskowitz experience.” “Without getting too esoteric, sometimes we were in the camper in certain places and it just was so bizarre that it was almost life imitating art in the sense that it was art—the art of living,” he says. “I feel like [getting] the camper back and refinish the [it] somehow, do it again, but this time with the knowledge that it’s art. Because when you’re in the moment, you think it’s really hard and it’s really harsh because you keep losing that meaning and the magic of the art of it.”

The now-37-year-old Paskowitz puts his unconventional upbringing and family on display in his first art show at the Mint Fine Art Gallery in San Clemente on Saturday. The one-night-only exhibit will bring out the Paskowitz family and the iconic camper. The artist hopes people will find it more entertaining and uplifting than a focus on his pain and suffering.

“I mean, yeah, that would be great if I were a famous artist or something, but I’m not,” he says. “I’m a Paskowitz! That’s the fun part! The art’s just a reflection of that.”

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» TAYLOR HAMBY

Mascara for Your Hair?

I’m a sucker for anything bright and obnoxious—especially in my hair. But depending on an alt-weekly rag’s pay ain’t exactly conducive to frequent trips to the hair salon for hot-pink streaks, and at-home hair dye in teal doesn’t last at all.

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Out to Sea Again

Throw Rag are back in action, but don't call it a reunion

BY REYAN ALI

Sean Wheeler's earliest memory of Throw Rag involves taking from the pages of the Man In Black. In late 1993, Wheeler and Dan "Scorcho" Lapham were working together in a San Juan Capistrano medical office when Wheeler—a guy who has been in bands since the age of 15—pitched his old friend an idea. "Hey, I want to start this band. Here's a Johnny Cash songbook. Just rip off a chord progression to see how [it works], and then there you go. We'll just make a song," recalls Wheeler (a.k.a. The Captain, Sean Doe and other aliases).

From the get-go, Throw Rag have exuded a devil-may-care sensibility, finding different ways to tap into that attitude. Soundwise, Wheeler had a few ideas in mind when the band launched. "I wanted it to be more acoustic/electric but powerful—[akin to] bands such as the Javelinas, the Flat Duo Jets," he says. "It ended up being a lot of different things."

As members came and went, the aesthetic shaped into something solid and distinctive. Early on, members started wearing leisure suits and white shoes during shows to both emit an aura of Cramps-like sleaziness and, eventually, have a reason to age gracefully because, in Wheeler's words, "It always looks weird when you're 60 years old, wearing peg pants and creepers, and you're kind of fat and old."

Around 1997, Wheeler became obsessed with the Salton Sea, bringing the nickname of "The Captain" into the mix. He would don a captain's hat during concerts, which eventually led to Throw Rag's art and lyrics frequently nodding to nautical themes. Another crucial element was the addition of washboard player Craig Jackman, who was brought in not because the group needed a washboard player, but rather because his spirited character added to the mayhem.

By the mid-2000s, their sound had evolved into a scruffy, often antagonistic fusion of punk, rockabilly, country, '50s rock & roll, and any other ingredients they could think of. Onstage, Wheeler's taste for gyrating and posing made him a particularly vibrant front man—the human equivalent of an alley cat absolutely intent on earning your attention. The band took all the proper steps to build their rep by signing to a solid label (BYO Records), playing tons of shows in front of crowds small and big (Gogol Bordello and Flogging Molly were among their tour partners), and contributing an entry to Kung Fu Records' *The Show Must Go Off!* live DVD series.

But fatigue eventually kicked in, leading to major changes. "We were on a tear, and some of the guys didn't want to tour as much, and it pretty much just stopped the band in its tracks. After a six- or nine-month hiatus, they missed playing, so we started



SPIFFY SAILORS

playing shows again, but all the momentum felt like it was stopped," Wheeler says. "We never broke up, but as far as really going full throttle and trying to chase the dream with Throw Rag, that all stopped years ago. Throw Rag are just another rock & roll band who are still playing."

Jackman exited the band in 2005, and his post at the washboard was never replaced. (Speaking in separate conversations, both Wheeler and guitarist Patrick "Dino" Bostrom say Jackman's character made him irreplaceable.) And the group have yet to release a full-length since 2008's *2nd Place*.

When Throw Rag take the stage with the Smut Peddlers on Saturday, it'll be the first time they've played together since summer 2010. In the time off, everyone has kept busy. Wheeler teamed up with Circle Jerks' Zander Schloss to form the acoustic-leaning Sean and Zander, Bostrom has been working in film and on a contribution to a punk compilation project called Plan B, bassist Francis "Franco Fontana" Cronin is in soul/jazz band the

New Rome Quartet, and drummer Chris "Chango" Von Streicher is now touring with the Supersuckers. (The New Rome Quartet's Steve Monroe will fill in for Von Streicher on the Observatory date.) Geography hasn't entirely been favorable to the nickname-happy band either: Wheeler is in Palm Springs, Bostrom in Long Beach, Cronin in Irvine, and Von Streicher all the way over in Austin.

All that being said, Bostrom and Wheeler emphasize that all is good in Camp Throw Rag, and this show doesn't signify a reunion since they never actually disbanded. "Right now, [the show is] a one-off, but the relationships in the band are better than they've ever been," Bostrom says. "There is a future [for the band]. There is always going to be a future. It's just a matter of when."

THROW RAG

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Ask EXENE

» EXENE CERVENKA

Lez Be Ourselves

DEAR EXENE: I'm a 21-year-old female who has been struggling with my sexuality, and I was hoping you could help me straighten something out. I recently met another female friend at school with whom I've become physical. I've dated guys in the past, but for some reason, I'm just totally drawn to her. We've been having sex for the past two weeks, and I've never felt this way before. Not to be graphic or anything, but she really makes me feel good. I feel like I'm starting to become emotionally invested in her, too. I'm really confused. I've tried talking to the girl, who came out to me the first night we hung out outside of class. When I've tried to analyze my feelings with her, I get the sense she's definitely got an interest in making me believe I've always been into women, but I just didn't know it. I'm not really sure if this is just because I'm physically attracted to her and I like her, or if I'm in an experimental phase. Have you ever had a similar situation with another woman? Do you think I might be gay? Maybe bi?

Love, Danielle

DEAR DANIELLE: Okay, I think you might be . . .

A beautiful, open-minded, 21-year-old-woman with a fearless nature. You've discovered a new aspect of yourself, and it's great you have someone with whom to explore that. However, her telling you that you've always been into women seems as though she's pressuring you a little. Maybe she is anxious you might think your feelings for her aren't solid, and this might be a passing feeling. And what if it is? Your head needs to stop analyzing so much. See where your heart takes you. The LGBT community is strong and supportive. If you find kinship there, lucky you. Have a lovely, magical, ridiculously happy, long, wonderful life.

Love, Exene

Exene Cervenka is a writer, visual artist and punk rock pioneer. The OC transplant is the lead singer for X, the Knitters and Original Sinners. If you want to ask the legendary vocalist for advice—on your love life, politics, your musical career, filial relationships—send an email to askexene@ocweekly.com.

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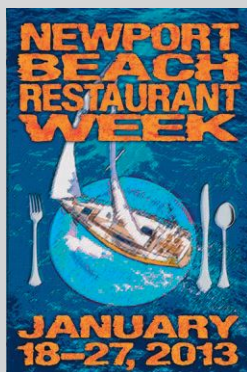
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SAT. DEC. 29TH WANDA JACKSON	NEW YEAR'S EVE KENDRICK LAMAR MON. DEC. 31ST	BONE THUGS -N- HARMONY THUR. JAN. 10TH
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STAN FRAZIER
COOKS WITH
THE FIRES
OF HELL

Damn! That Drummer Boy Can Cook!

Ex-Sugar Ray member Stan Frazier shares his recipe for success after winning Season 1 of *Chef Race: U.S. vs. U.K.*

BY NATE JACKSON

Rarely does a reality cooking show inspire as much hoopla as a howling Super Bowl party. In a tiny clubhouse behind A Restaurant in Newport Beach, former Sugar Ray drummer Stan Frazier cheers with loudmouthed friends and family plopped on leather couches and any available piece of open carpet. His eyes fix on a giant HD TV, staring at a grill fire, chilled soups and dainty garnishes as though he's watching a fourth-and-goal touchdown attempt. Most important, he's watching himself onscreen, lining up against world-class restaurateur Cody Utzman in the final round of Season 1 of Jamie Oliver's *Chef Race: U.S. vs. U.K.* And he's kicking ass, culinary-style.

A rowdy Team Frazier hurls taunts at Utzman from the peanut gallery. "You're going down, Cody! Not your day, bro!"

When he was announced the winner, Frazier kissed his wife, Jennifer, and reached for an overhanging beam and started swinging like a monkey.

Last month, the *Chef Race* finale aired on BBC. Sitting back in his OC hometown, Frazier celebrated the win during an A Restaurant viewing party sponsored by local companies such as Karma Tequila. But aside from winning \$100,000 and bragging rights, the 44-year-old drummer walked away with the career path he's wanted for as long as he can remember.

"I was going to go to culinary school or play drums in a band. The drum thing worked out pretty good for me," Frazier says as he puffs on a clove cigarette outside the party. "But I always had a demon in my back pocket saying, 'Go try culinary.'"

After years of learning to cook at home (a skill he'd picked up from his father, an Air Force pilot), this foray into celebrity chefhood came in the form of a Craigslist ad his wife discovered during a job search. It read, "Do You Like *Survivor*? Do You Like Cooking? Are You a Foodie? Are You a Chef?" She immediately showed it to Frazier.

At the time, he'd been itching to

bow out of Sugar Ray and explore new options. Outside of producing a new record for Huntington Beach's the Dirty Heads, the longtime food enthusiast was jumping at the chance to become a real chef. Why not do it with a reality show? The show's producers auditioned 13,000 people across the U.S. and England to find 16 contestants—eight Americans, eight Brits—to compete in traveling food challenges from LA to New York over 12 weeks. After auditioning, Frazier was convinced he wouldn't get picked. After all, he had zero formal training. Chopping up his snare beats on songs such as "Some Day" and "Fly" didn't count.

Surprisingly, he got the call to cook his style of fresh California and Mexican cuisine, plus plenty of other crazy shit. Of course there were the usual trials: squabbles with cast members, getting his skills picked apart every week, the task of cooking an entire goat head to the liking of Michelin-starred chef/judges such as Richard Corrigan.

As the show progressed, Frazier says he continued to learn and elevate his style. The light ceviche he made in the final cook-off was actually the heavy hitter that put him over the top with the judges.

Since the show wrapped, Frazier has a few ideas about capitalizing on his new rock-star-chef status, including developing a—surprise—reality cooking show, *Chop and Roll*. It would involve Frazier spontaneously taking over cooking duties, either catering or in the kitchen, for big-name celebs and recording artists. "Basically, it's *Cribs* and *Punk'd* with food," he says. The perfect pairing, in his mind, as which two things are more similar than cooking a meal and writing a song?

"It's the same damn thing," Frazier says. "It's like an artist with a blank canvas. Unless you're baking a specific cake that has to have exact ingredients. I don't cook like that. So it's synonymous as a motherfucker."

NJACKSON@OCWEEKLY.COM

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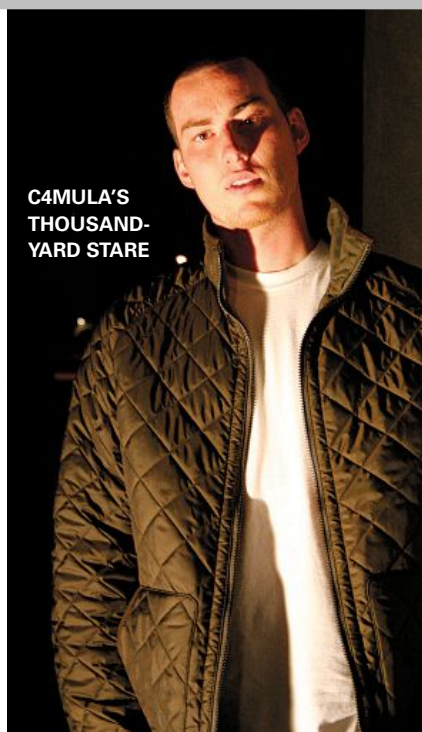
C4mula should not be alive right now. The list of near-death experiences he has racked up at the ripe old age of 29 is pretty astounding. Flipping over in cars in two separate accidents, the victim in a malicious hit and run outside of Malone's in Santa Ana, having multiple guns pulled in his face, surviving a nearly lethal bout of alcoholism—all that barely covers half of it. Hooking an index finger inside his mouth, he pulls his lips back on the right side to reveal several teeth broken two months ago after getting jumped and beaten unconscious at a house party.

But before you even hear him rap, you can tell that behind his thin-rimmed glasses, backward hat and clean-cut, class-clown cleverness is a guy who refuses to let life's perils blow him to smithereens. After an 8-year career in the underground hip-hop scene, dozens of tracks and albums recorded, his latest offering, *Another Stupid Mixtape Too*, is his first step in honing a positive, thankful outlook on life. For now at least, the endless carousel of risky situations and self-destruction is over.

As a kid, the rapper born Andrew Bowman showed all the signs of a ticking time bomb. After getting caught scribbling down notes on making actual bombs from an Anarchist Cookbook in high school, he was nearly expelled. When he was allowed to return to school, he found out he'd earned the nickname "C-4" (as in the plastic explosive). It just kinda stuck, so he decided to own it.

Though it started off as a joke, the name, which he morphed into C4mula, became rather fitting with every album and mixtape he minted with the help of local hip-hop collectives such as Technicali Sound and the Committee Fam. His approach to his rhymes easily detonates a lot of tired, OC hip-hop stereotypes, delivering bars that ooze with swagger, technicality and personal struggle. Each rhyme carries the tone and buzzing authority of a gas-powered chain saw. New tracks such as "Expose the Heart" share stories about still being in high school while watching his father die from cancer, torturing his mother with his rebellious ways, waking up in the hospital after passing out thanks to drinking what he thinks might've been GHB at a party. Onstage, his right hand traces the air in front of him as he raps, bobbing and weaving like a shadow boxer.

Despite being a local name in OC rap, he has had near-misses with mainstream success, including a gig ghostwriting for AMC records after being discovered out of high school by a label rep who offered him a recording deal. He moved east with fellow rapper Eternal Jones, and both of them commenced working in Philadelphia and New York, writing and developing tracks with Raw Digga, Lords of Brooklyn



C4MULA'S
THOUSAND-
YARD STARE

His approach to his rhymes easily detonates a lot of tired, OC hip-hop stereotypes, delivering bars that ooze with swagger, technicality and personal struggle.

and others at such places as the legendary Chung King Studios in Manhattan. The deal fizzled after a couple of years due to poor management advice and a declining record industry. A year after returning home to OC, Eternal Jones was arrested and charged with attempted murder after a drug deal gone wrong resulted in a shooting death. He received a sentence of 27 years in prison. It's not exactly something C4mula likes talking about, unless it leaks out in his rhymes.

Though that life seems to be light years away now, the past several years of C4mula's career have been a steady progression out of a dark hole he'd found himself in. An active show schedule, recording projects galore and a dynamite lyrical partnership with Placentia rapper Brawdcast have inspired him to keep grinding and shocking anyone who underestimates him before he opens his mouth. Yeah, he still raps about getting wasted and wild. But his crazy tales take on more of a cautionary tone, warning troubled souls going down the same road he did. For a kid who grew up learning to build bombs with his craftiness, it turns out learning to diffuse them with his craft has become infinitely more satisfying.

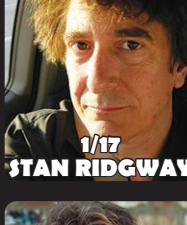
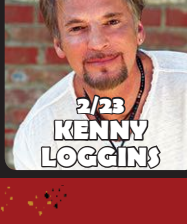
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For more information on C4mula and to download *Another Stupid Mixtape Too*, visit www.c4mula.com, www.facebook.com/C4mula and www.technicali.com.

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UPCOMING SHOWS

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2/2 SINBAD	3/2 DADA / 7 HORSE
2/7 PAUL THORN / TOMMY CASTRO	3/8 AMBROSIA
2/8 THE WAILERS / ROGER STEFFANS	3/10 THE GREEN / NEW KINGSTON
2/9 THE TUBES	3/15 EDWIN McCAIN
2/14 OTTMAR LIEBERT & Luna Negra	4/4 BIG HEAD TODD & THE MONSTERS
2/16 OZOKIDZ	4/12 CARL PALMER'S ELP LEGACY
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this week

THURSDAY, DEC. 13

AQUABATS: 8 p.m., \$20-\$22. House of Blues, 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim.

CHRISTMAS KANIKAPILA TOUR: 8 p.m., \$20. The Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, Ste. C, San Juan Capistrano, 949-496-8930, www.thecoachhouse.com.

DWIGHT YOAKAM: 8 p.m., \$45-\$65. City National Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, 714-712-2750, www.citynationalgroveofanaheim.com.

LIMBECK; TRAPPER SCOEPP & THE SHADES; THE CAT BURLGARS: 9 p.m., \$5. The Prospector, 2400 E. Seventh St., Long Beach, 562-438-3839, www.prospectorlongbeach.com.

PRODIGY: 7 p.m., \$20. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

SLOW LEARNER; THE BARRELOUSERS; EDDIE BOOZE; BOA CONSTRUCTORS; TAYLOR COLLINS: 9 p.m., \$7. DiPiazza's Restaurant & Lounge, 5205 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, 562-498-2461, www.dipiazas.com.

FRIDAY, DEC. 14

DIRTY LITTLE SECRETS BURLESQUE: 9 p.m., free. The Pike Bar & Fish Grill, 1836 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, 562-437-4453, www.pikelongbeach.com.

NOFX: 8 p.m., \$28.50. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

THE STARTING LINE: 7 p.m., \$25. The Glass House, 200 W. Second St., Pomona, 909-865-3802, www.theglasshouse.us.

WAYNE "THE TRAIN" HANCOCK: 8 p.m., \$10. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-434-8292, www.alexsbars.com.

SATURDAY, DEC. 15

DAUGHTRY: 7 p.m., \$25-\$74.45. Honda Center, 2695 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, 714-704-2400, www.honda-center.com/default.aspx.

THE ISRAELITES: 9 p.m., free. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com.

JONNY LANG: 8 p.m., \$59. The Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, Ste. C, San Juan Capistrano, 949-496-8930, www.thecoachhouse.com.

LIMBECK: 7:30 p.m., \$12-\$14. Chain Reaction, 1652 W. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim, 714-635-6067, www.allages.com.

O'JAYS: 8 p.m., \$50-\$95. Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, 12700 Center Court Dr., Cerritos, 562-467-8818, www.cerritoscenter.com.

SUNDAY, DEC. 16

D.I.: 9 p.m., free. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com.

HURRICANE SANDY BENEFIT CONCERT, FEATURING FALSE PUPPET; TIFFANY ALVORD; TREMOR; YOURS TRULY; PARALYZERS; THE UNKNOWN; COLOR BLIND; UNCALLED 4; LIKE OUR LAST: 2 p.m., \$15. DiPiazza's Restaurant & Lounge, 5205 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, 562-498-2461, www.dipiazas.com.

WILD PACK OF CANARIES; TWIN STEPS; MERRY CHRISTMAS: 8 p.m., free. Que Sera, 1923 E. Seventh St., Long Beach, 562-599-6170, www.thequesera.com.

MONDAY, DEC. 17

SOCIAL DISTORTION: 7 p.m., \$30. House of Blues, 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim.

TUESDAY, DEC. 18

JOHN WAYNE BROTHERS: 9 p.m., free. The Pike Bar & Fish Grill, 1836 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, 562-437-4453, www.pikelongbeach.com.

PHIL SHANE: 7 p.m., free. Original Mike's, 100 S. Main

St., Santa Ana, 714-550-7764, www.originalmikes.com.

SOCIAL DISTORTION: 8 p.m., \$30. House of Blues, 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim.

STEVIE TOMBSTONE; KERN RICHARDS: \$5. The Prospector, 2400 E. Seventh St., Long Beach, 562-438-3839, www.prospectorlongbeach.com.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 19

CHASE LONG BEACH: 7 p.m., \$10. Chain Reaction, 1652 W. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim, 714-635-6067, www.allages.com.

MIKE HAMILTON: 10:30 p.m., free. French 75 Bistro and Champagne Bar, 1464 S. Pacific Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, 949-494-8444, www.french75.net.

NEVERWONDER; I&I; OKIM: 7 p.m., \$12.50-\$15. House of Blues, 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim.

VINCE NEIL: 8 p.m., \$58-\$75. City National Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, 714-712-2750, www.citynationalgroveofanaheim.com.

WHITEBOY JAMES & THE BLUES EXPRESS: 9:30 p.m., \$5. Harvelle's Long Beach, 201 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-239-3700.

THURSDAY, DEC. 20

THE GROWLERS: 9 p.m., \$15. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-434-8292, www.alexsbars.com.

HAVE A GRIMEY DANKMAS: 7 p.m., \$10-\$12. The Glass House, 200 W. Second St., Pomona, 909-865-3802, www.theglasshouse.us.

T. MILLS: 8 p.m., \$20. Constellation Room at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600, www.constellationroom.com.

club*guide

rock

BACK ALLEY BAR & GRILL: 116 1/2 W. Wilshire Ave., Ste. C, Fullerton, 714-526-3032, www.myspace.com/backalleyfullerton. **Thu:** 9 p.m., '80s Enough, free.

THE SLIDEBAR ROCK-N-ROLL KITCHEN: 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com. **Tue:** 9 p.m., '80s Night.

jazz

LA CAVE: 1695 Irvine Ave., Costa Mesa, 949-646-7944, www.lacaverestaurant.com. **Mon:** 6 p.m. Dave Kinwald, tribute to Frank Sinatra, free.

STEAMERS JAZZ CLUB: 138 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-871-8800, www.steamerscafe.com. **Sun:** 8 p.m., Evan Stone's Jazz Jam, free.

blues

HARVELLE'S LONG BEACH: 201 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-239-3700. **Thu:** 8 p.m., The Toledo Show, \$10. **Fri:** 8 p.m., Harlow Gold, \$15-\$30. **Tue:** 8 p.m., Jack's Tea Room, \$10. **Wed:** 9:30 p.m., Whiteboy James & the Blues Express, \$5.

HOUSE OF BLUES: 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim. **Thu:** 10 p.m., Rockin' the Blues, free.

KOBE JAPANESE STEAK HOUSE & LOUNGE: 3001 Old Ranch Pkwy., Seal Beach, 562-596-9969, www.kobebistro.com. **Thu:** 7:30 p.m., Derek Bordeaux, free.

dance

HAMBURGER MARY'S: 740 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-436-7900, www.hamburgermaryslb.com. **Thu:** 9 p.m., The Doll House. **Sat:** 9 p.m., Super Doll House. **Wed:** 9 p.m., Wild Wednesdays, \$5.

country

HAMBURGER MARY'S: 740 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-436-7900, www.hamburgermaryslb.com. **Sat:** 2 p.m., Line Dancing Mania, \$10.

IN CAHOOTS/CLUB RIO: 1401 S. Lemon, Fullerton, 714-525-9700, www.ocincahoots.com. **Fri:** 5 p.m., Country Fridays, \$5.

THE SWALLOW'S INN: 31786 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano, 949-493-3188, www.swallowsinn.com. **Mon:** 6:30 p.m., DJ Patrick, free.

reggae

HEDZ OR TALES: 211 E. Imperial Hwy., La Habra, 714-526-3132. **Sat:** 9 p.m., Reggae Saturdays, featuring DJ JFX, \$10.

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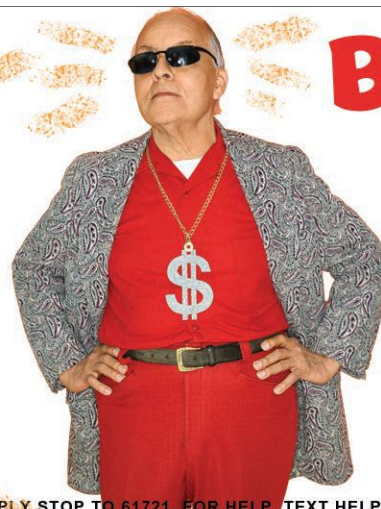
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TUESDAYS

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9:00 pm

WEDNESDAYS

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THURSDAYS

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LATIN NIGHT DJ KABOOM
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53 CORDONAS 'TIL 10:30
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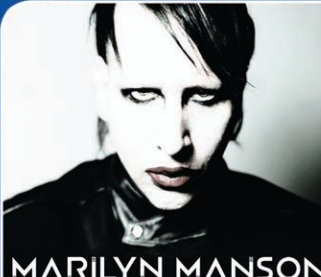
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Saturday, December 29

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club*guide

KOBE JAPANESE STEAK HOUSE & LOUNGE: 3001 Old Ranch Pkwy., Seal Beach, 562-596-9969, www.kobebistro.com. **Fri:** 8 p.m., Upstream, free.

MOZAMBIQUE: 1740 S. Pacific Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, 949-715-7777, www.mozambiqueoc.com. **Sun:** 7 p.m., Reggae Sundays, free.

SANDY'S BEACH GRILL: 315 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach, 714-374-7273, www.sandysbeachgrill.com. **Tue, Fri:** 6 p.m., Cali Conscious, free.

acoustic

TANTALUM RESTAURANT: 6272 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Ste. A, Long Beach, 562-431-1414, www.tantalumrestaurant.com. **Sat:** 6:30 p.m., The Joneses, free. **Sun:** 2 p.m.; **Wed:** 6 p.m., Angela Aldatz & Her Band of Gypsies, free. **Tue:** 6 p.m., Kristi Jo, free.

dj

DETROIT BAR: 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, 949-642-0600, www.detroitbar.com. **Fri:** 9 p.m., Static Fridays, \$5-\$10.

HAMBURGER MARY'S: 740 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-436-7900, www.hamburgermaryslb.com. **Fri:** Boybar.

HEAT ULTRA LOUNGE: 321 W. Katella Ave., Ste. 214, Anaheim, 714-776-4328, www.heatultralounge.com. **Thu:** Dec. 20, 9:30 p.m., Sean Tyas, \$15.

HURRICANES BAR & GRILL: 200 Main St., Huntington Beach, 714-374-0500, www.hurricanesbargrill.com. **Thu:** 9 p.m., My Club Scene Thursdays, free. **Tue:** 8 p.m., DJ Impact, free. **Wed:** 9 p.m., DJ Gil, free.

KAVIKAS GRILL & BAR: 95 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, 562-432-8700, www.kavikas.com. **Fri:** 10 p.m., Sexy Fridays.

LA CAVE: 1695 Irvine Ave., Costa Mesa, 949-646-7944, www.lacaverestaurant.com. **Wed:** 8 p.m., Kedd Cook, free.

MEMPHIS AT THE SANTORA: 201 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, 714-564-1064, www.memphiscafe.com/santora/. **Thu:** 9:30 p.m., Acoustic Playlist, with DJ Todd Oliver, free. **Fri:** 9:30 p.m., The Santora Sessions, with the Downtown Sound

DJ Collective, rock, funk, soul, country and everything in between, free.

MEMPHIS SOUL CAFE: 2920 Bristol St., Costa Mesa, 714-432-7685, www.memphiscafe.com. **Thu:** 10 p.m., University of Groove, free. **Fri:** 10 p.m., Versatile Fridays, with DJ Cocoe, free. **Sat:** 10 p.m., White Collar, with DJ Ben Danger, free.

ORIGINAL MIKE'S: 100 S. Main St., Santa Ana, 714-550-7764, www.originalmikes.com. **Thu:** 9 p.m., College Night, bike night and cigar club, free.

THE PIKE BAR & FISH GRILL: 1836 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, 562-437-4453, www.pikelongbeach.com. **Thu:** Dec. 13, 9 p.m., DJ Aldo and Angel, free. **Wed:** Dec. 19, 9 p.m., DJ Sonic, free. **Thu:** Dec. 20, 9 p.m., DJ Lou Screw, free.

SUTRA LOUNGE: 1870 Harbor Blvd., Ste. 200, Costa Mesa, 949-722-7103, www.sutraoc.com. **Thu:** Dec. 13, 9 p.m., MS\$4, \$20. **Fri:** Sutra Fridays. **Thu:** Dec. 20, 9 p.m., Nada Ali, \$20.

VLVT VELVET LOUNGE: 416 W. Fourth St., Santa Ana, 714-664-0663, www.velvetoc.com. **Thu:** 10 p.m., Caliente, free.

THE YOST THEATER: 307 N. Spurgeon St., Santa Ana, 888-862-9573, www.yosttheater.com. **Fri:** Dec. 14, 10 p.m., LA Riots, \$15-\$20. **Thu:** Dec. 20, 10 p.m., Chuckie, \$25-\$40.

latin

XALOS BAR: 1160 N. Kraemer Blvd., Anaheim, 714-632-0390, www.xalosbar.com. **Sat:** 9 p.m., Sabados a Xalos, with DJ Woody Tocando.

lgbt

PARADISE PIANO BAR & RESTAURANT: 1800 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-590-8773, www.paradisepianobar.com. **Thu:** Josh Morphis, free. **Sat:** 9 p.m. DJ McCracken, free.

VLVT VELVET LOUNGE: 416 W. Fourth St., Santa Ana, 714-664-0663, www.velvetoc.com. **Fri:** 10 p.m., Flex Friday, free. **Sat:** 10 p.m., Star Bar, free. **Sun:** 9 p.m., Crush, free, 21+. **Mon:** 10 p.m., Dreamgirls Revue, free.

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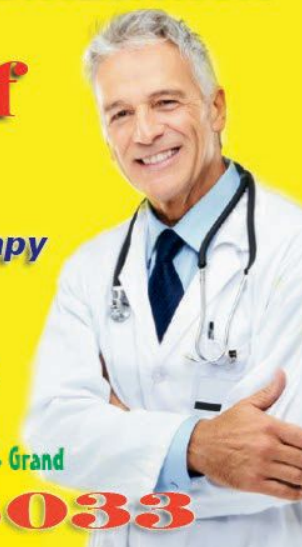
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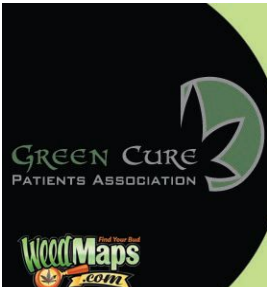
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savage love»

»DAN SAVAGE

At a dinner party, a straight man posed a question to my boyfriend and me. He assumed that we, being gay men, would have an answer for him. We did not, Dan, and so we turn to you. What happens to one if one has to fart while one is wearing a butt plug?

Gays Are Simply Stumped, Yes And Sincerely So

If one is wearing a butt plug ("wear: to carry or to have on the body or about the person as a covering, ornament or the like"), GASSYASS, then one may pass gas, silently or noisily, as one is wont to do because a butt plug worn as a hat or a brooch or an epaulet—that is, a butt plug worn on the body—presents no impediment. But if one has fully inserted the bulbous end of the butt plug into one's rectal cavity, and one's sphincter muscles are gripping the neck of the butt plug, as they are wont to do, thereby ensuring that the bulbous end remains lodged in the rectal cavity while the flared base remains outside of the rectal cavity (one could, if one wished to be pedantic, argue that one wears the flared base of the butt plug against one's anus), what would then happen if one attempted to pass gas? The force of the gas would either dislodge one's butt plug, sending it flying across one's room, or, if one's butt plug failed to dislodge and take flight, cause one to simply explode.

I had a conversation with a friend who is an emergency-room physician. He told me about removing something—I can't remember what—from a gentleman's ass. My immediate response was to ask whether he had the flared-base talk with the gentleman after the fact. His response? "What are you talking about?" I explained that if the gentleman had used a butt toy with a flared base, he wouldn't have been in the circumstances that brought him to the hospital. He had never thought of that and thanked me for the advice. My partner is a physician and has treated patients with anal "encumbrances." He gives the flared-base advice to anyone who seems as though he or she might benefit from it—but he tells me this isn't something gone over in med school. This shocks me because it seems like a topic in which a little education could do a lot of good. You should use your column to bring this to the attention of medical-school administrators.

Conscience Cleared

I am sharing your letter in the hopes that doctors all over the world read it and promptly incorporate your "flared-base" advice into their practice. If they don't, well, then we will just have to conclude that flared-base advice isn't given to patients by doctors—ER or otherwise—because doctors secretly enjoy digging various foreign objects out of the variable rectums of various gentlemen.

I'm a 19-year-old bisexual male. I've been in a two-year relationship with a girl who has a low sex drive, so we are in an open relationship, and I occasionally have sex with guys. I really liked the last guy I got with and enjoyed having sex with him a lot. The problem was I couldn't get hard. Is the problem that I'm still trying to figure out who I am and what I want? Am I not as attracted to guys as I thought I was? Or could it be guilt, even though my girlfriend is okay with it?

Bisexually Oriented Nervously Experiencing Reversal

You say you "occasionally have sex with guys," BONER, which means this guy isn't your first. He's just the first guy—perhaps the first person—you couldn't get hard with. Let me guess: *This has never happened to you before.* Of course it hasn't—you're 19. But it happens to every guy sooner or later, and you're much likelier to seek an explanation or attach some

deeper meaning to it the first time it happens. (Maybe I'm not bi! Maybe it was guilt!) Don't waste your time. Sometimes a soft dick is just a soft dick. If it keeps happening, well, then you may have a problem. But if you go on obsessing about an isolated incident—perhaps brought on by nerves (you liked this guy, right?)—you run the risk of creating a problem.

I was on a layover in San Francisco. My attractive, bearish, platonic, straight, male co-worker would like to know if it is weird that a guy complimented his shoes while at the urinal in the SFO bathroom.

Rhymes With Larry Craig?

Yes.

As I was reading the letters in the last *Savage Love*, it occurred to me the debate over polyamory as a "sexual orientation" is primarily one of definitions. Some folks who are poly see that as just as "core" to their nature as their gender preference. Therefore, I propose the following framework. We all have a *sexual identity* of four components:

1. Our *gender identity* ranging from cis to trans.
2. Our *sexual orientation* ranging from homo to hetero.
3. Our *sexual exclusivity* ranging from purely monogamous to purely polyamorous.
4. Our *sexual interest* ranging from asexual to highly sexual.

In my view, these four components are equal in that they are all things that we *are* rather than things that we *choose*. While it is possible to choose a lifestyle that deviates from one's sexual identity, in all cases, doing so entails stress, cognitive dissonance and some degree of self-loathing. Like all conceptual frameworks, this one is not necessarily complete. It fails to include sexual interest in animals, particular age groups, or any of several hundred kinks, all of which are traits that seem to be more identity than choice. That said, I do think there is something unique and universally applicable in the four-component scheme, and I think we should as a society set a goal of acceptance and nondiscrimination surrounding all aspects of sexual identity.

Just My Thoughts

I like your model, but it has to be said: At a certain point, endless Tumblr-enabled debates about sexual identity, gender identity, sexual orientation and sexual interests take on the flavor of those how-many-angels-can-dance-on-the-head-of-a-pin debates that obsessed theologians in the Middle Ages.

For the record: Each of us is free—and remains free—to identify however we wish and to apply the labels "identity" and/or "orientation" however we please. If a particular person isn't trying to take anything away from you, then the fact the person holds slightly differing views on identity or orientation, or the meanings of those words, or just how many angels can dance on the head of a pin, well, it really isn't an enormous fucking deal, is it? And, in my opinion, those who spend their time debating, classifying and unpacking sex and identity run a very real risk of disappearing up their own ass in a puff of santorum. Which is my way of saying . . .

No, I won't be giving a column over to angry letters from buttsores people who feel that D/s is their sexual orientation, despite being told that I must because last week I suggested that, from my point of view, D/s is a sexual identity, not an orientation, and I gave a column to angry poly folks so it's only fair and blah blah blah.

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Download the *Savage Love*cast every Tuesday at thestranger.com/savage. Follow Dan on Twitter: @fakedansavage.

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actors' alley

642 Classes

Standup Comedy Workshop

Taught by 20 year veteran standup pro.
For More info go to
www.KillerKomedv.com
949-313-1030

automotive

421 Used Auto

CASH 4 ANY CARS

Free pick up/tow.
No title OK. 24/7
714-450-3988
Top \$\$ Paid, FAST

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427 Misc. Auto

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Car/Truck. Running or Not!
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www.cash4car.com

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Fund Of America.
(888) 269-6482

health

810 Health

LADIES: BIRTH CONTROL RESEARCH STUDY - Not planning to start a family yet?

This research study evaluates an investigational 28-day cycle birth control pill, provided to participants for 1 year at no cost.

- Women 18 to 50 yrs of age
- At risk of becoming pregnant and not planning to use other contraceptive methods
- 6 office visits over 14 months, with investigational birth control pills provided for up to 1 year
- **Compensation up to \$600.00 for time and travel if you qualify**

Call for a confidential screening 714-542-3008 Ext 306
Research Across America

810 Health

CAN'T FACE IT ANY LONGER?

If you are experiencing **persistent redness with bumps and/or pimples**, you may qualify for a research study for people with **Rosacea**.
To qualify

- Over 18 years old
- **Diagnosis of moderate Rosacea**

Participants receive:
• **Study related health evaluation**
• **Rosacea assessment**
• **Investigational study medication**

NO INSURANCE IS NEEDED
Call Research Across America at 714-541-3008 Ext 306

ORANGE COUNTY MALE MEDICAL CLINICS

Revolutionary prescription medications to treat Erectile and Premature issues. We treat men of all ages and with any medical condition in just one \$95 office visit.

310-300-1743
One Visit. Better Sex.
Call Today
www.NationalIMMC.com

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SIGN UP FOR OUR ACNE RESEARCH STUDY!!

- Ages 12 to 40 with moderate to severe facial acne
- Receive investigational topical medication or placebo at no cost.
- Qualified subjects may receive up to \$300.00 for time and travel

Call Research Across America today to see if you qualify 714-542-3008 Ext 306 OR text the word "PIMPLE" to 8-7888

810 Health

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Get Certified by the IFBB PROS! Online Home Study Course PROPTA.com 800.317.3577

NO HORMONES, NO CONDOMS

Study invites couples to test experimental contraceptive gel. Earn up to \$700 + free supplies. 800-398-1998 / testmethods.org

merchandise

445 Miscellaneous

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music

605 Musicians Available/Wanted

NATIONAL TOURING DRUMMER

FOR HIRE
(516)457-5578
PAID GIGS ONLY
www.AllenBenatar.com

605 Musicians Available/Wanted

17th ST. Recording Studio

Recording session includes platinum Engineer. Credits include: **Sting, Mary J Blige, Sublime, Dirty Heads, Long Beach Dub Allstars, Sublime w/ Rome, Slightly Stoopid, Sugar Ray** & more

Fast Pro Tools skills. Studio A has a Master DAW Pro Tools HD4, one ISO vocal booth & Studio Mix Room B has Pro Tools HD.

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628 Recording Studios

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new age

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Help People Lose Fat

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LEARN HOW TO STAY IN SHAPE FOR EVER

Sessions are open without getting certified.

GI Bill Approved Accredited, Approved, Endorsed

PROPTA
Personal Trainers Association
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WWW.PROPTA.COM

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305 Roommates

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240 Miscellaneous

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EDUCATION
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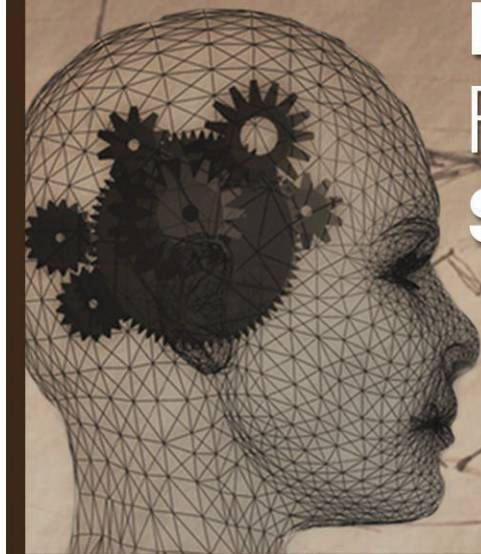
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Former high-ranking member of the worlds most exclusive secret society tells all and reveals the truth. This is the same knowledge that has been exclusively used by the privileged elite class to achieve wealth, power, money, luck, romance, love, and dynamic health. Now you can have an unfair advantage and achieve success in life faster and easier than ever before! For a **FREE** CD and more information, Please Call (714) 602-3015.

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Unreal selection of new/used Guitars, Amps, Ukles, Drums, Pro-Audio & More.
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Get an Extra \$40 For Your Gold (with 15 g or more) OCW1129-40
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SELL YOUR GOLD FOR GOODNESS SAKE!

WE BUY GOLD, SILVER, JEWELRY, COINS, WATCHES, AND MORE!

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ANAHEIM 846 BROOKHURST ST. 92804 (714) 781-5700 MON - SAT 10:30AM-6:30PM LICENSE #30011067	RIVERSIDE 10955 MAGNOLIA AVE. 92505 (951) 729-5012 MON - SAT 10:30AM-5:30PM LICENSE #33131123	LAKEWOOD 11421 E CARSON #G 90715 (888) 677-3538 MON - SAT 10:30AM-5:30PM LICENSE #19001884

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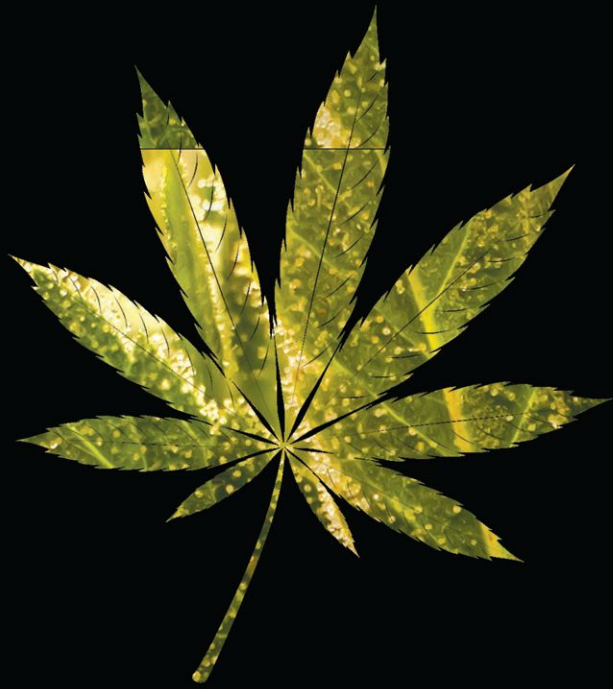
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Wednesday, December 19th

**\$2 House
Margaritas
— All Day —**

Dining Room & Cantina



*Monthly Margarita Day is the third Wednesday of every month.

ZONE 1



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- Facials
- Massage
- Makeup
- Massage
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- Therapy

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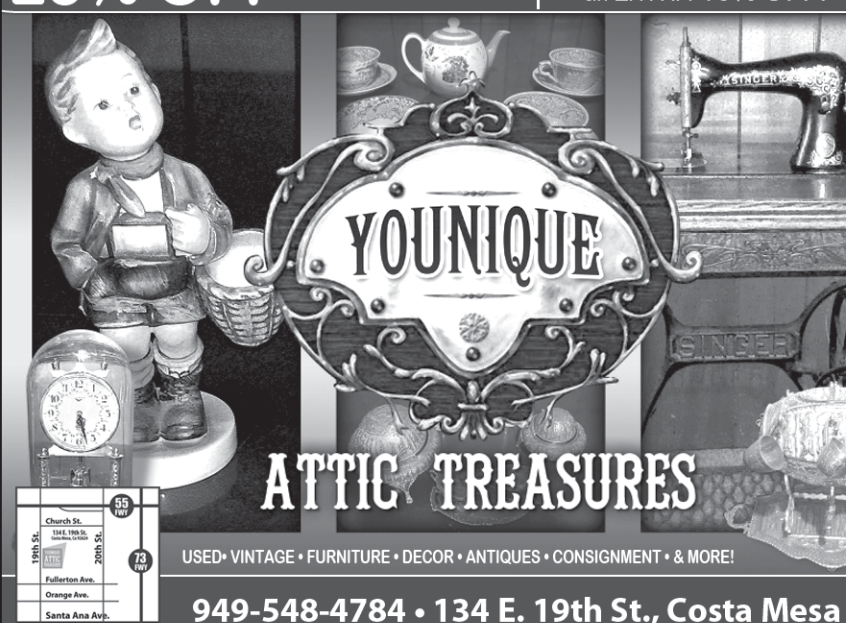
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Come see how our cupcakes stack up

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FRIDAY
SATURDAY
SUNDAY

HAPPY HOUR DAILY UNTIL 7PM

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 SUN 12.16.12
10AM- 1:30PM

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BEST DAMNED BBQ IN ORANGE,
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HAPPY HOUR MONDAY-THURSDAY
 4-8PM
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 -THE COMET

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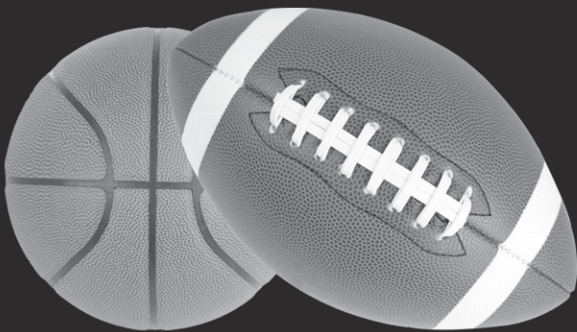


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LAKERS-PAC 12 NETWORK *EVERY GAME*

\$2 DRAFTS DURING GAMES

HAPPY HOUR EVERYDAY 7 DAYS A WEEK 3-7PM | SUN 4-7PM



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\$5 BURGER IS BACK! HAPPY HOUR 'TIL END OF GAME

TUESDAY
FIESTA NITE \$10- INCLUDES DRINK

WEDNESDAY
PASTA NITE \$10-INCLUDES DRINK

FRIDAY-SATURDAY
PRIME RIB DINNER \$11.95 5-8PM OR 'TIL SELLS OUT

SUNDAY
BRUNCH 'TIL 1PM BLOODY MARY BAR 320Z \$7.95
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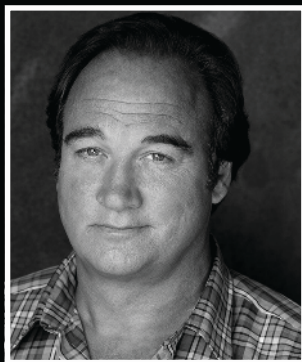


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Dec 14 & 15



**BOB
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Dec 21 - 23

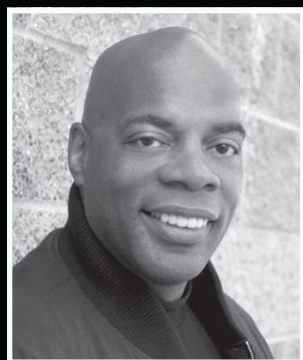


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*USE OFFER CODE L77 TO REDEEM.

WIN 1 OF 5 \$200 GIFT CARDS
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HAIRCUT AND BLOWOUT \$20
COLOR AND BLOWOUT \$25+
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ALL WORK IS PERFORMED BY LICENSED ASSISTANT HAIRDRESSERS AND SUPERVISED BY CARLTON HAIR MASTER EDUCATORS.

NOW OPEN IN DOWNTOWN FULLERTON!

Daily Lunch Specials

Starting at \$6.25
See restaurant for Details

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Cupcakes • Pastries • Layer Cakes

Come see how our cupcakes stack up

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Sunday 11am-7pm

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continues to out sell their competition daily!

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CHEESE
PIZZA

pick up only

\$7.42

+TAX

Homemade
Spaghetti

\$3.71

+TAX

Spaghetti
with meatballs

\$4.64

+TAX

Laventina's
**Big
Cheese
Pizza**

Open until 2AM
Friday & Saturday

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\$2.50

A GLASS

\$10

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- FREE POOL
- STEEL TIP DARTS
- 16 BEERS ON DRAFT
- 8 FLAT SCREEN TV'S
- HAPPY HOUR DAILY 4PM - 7PM

\$3 and \$4 Drafts / \$4 Mai Tai's / \$4 House Wine

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CHECK OUT OUR GREAT SELECTION
OF BEER, WINE, LIQUOR, INCLUDING CRISTAL

JON'S LIQUOR

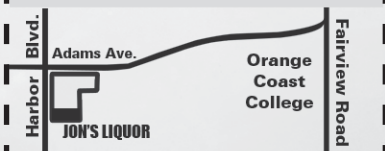


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15% CASH BACK
WITH SALE OVER \$25

(EVERYDAY LOW PRICES)

*EXPIRES DEC 31ST



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EVERY SUNDAY

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MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL

Free Food • Drink Specials • Free Pool
(after 9pm)

**YES! WE WILL BE OPEN
DURING THE HOLIDAYS**

8AM - 2AM

DECEMBER 24TH & 25TH

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\$60 G-PENS | **\$25 CASE OF POWER 5X BUTANE** | **BUY 2 OIL BURNERS GET 1 FREE**

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ESSENTIAL \$299** | **DEBUT CARBON \$399****

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SPECIAL ORDER NEW VINYL & GET 10% OFF!

TONS OF USED & NEW VINYL
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HAPPY HOUR
3PM-6PM M-F
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ALL LAKERS AND PAC 12 GAMES SHOWN HERE

PLAY OUR

LIVE LOBSTER TANK GAME

For \$2 a play
you can win a
FREE Maine Lobster!



UFC & BOXING FIGHTS NO COVER

KARAOKE TUESDAY

(BRING COLLEGE ID FOR 10% OFF):

\$2 SELECT DRAFTS ALL NIGHT

2 TACOS & A BEER = \$5

WEDNESDAY: BIKE NIGHT

(WEEKLY TROPHY TO BEST BIKE)

STREET, CUSTOM, HARLEY, AND OTHERS WELCOME

SAT & SUN 11AM - 3PM

\$6 BOTTOMLESS MIMOSAS

FILET MIGNON & EGGS = \$15

HAPPY HOUR

7 DAYS A WEEK 3PM-7PM

Beer-Domestic- \$3 16oz, \$5 24oz | Import- \$4 16 oz, \$6 24oz.

\$4 well drinks

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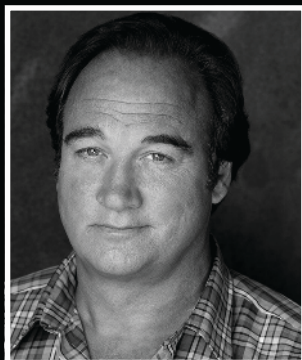
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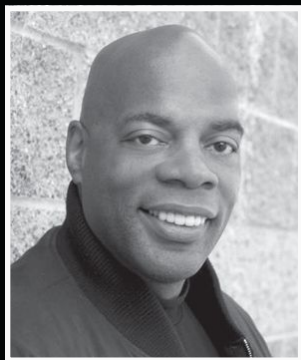
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Naughty or Nice?...

COME SEE SANTA & HIS MIDGET ELVES!
FRIDAY DEC. 14TH, 4 PM

**HAPPY
HOUR** MONDAY-THURSDAY
4-8PM
Domestic bottles and tap \$3.25
Pitchers \$9

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FRIDAY & SUNDAY
5 for price of 4 | \$4 pint and \$12 pitcher



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MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL
Free Food • Drink Specials • Free Pool
(after 9pm)

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